The Britannia Panopticon Music Hall and Cosmopolitan Entertainment Culture

Paul Maloney

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Cover illustration: Chorley and Connor, Irish comedians, who appeared at the Britannia from the early 1890s. Author's collection.

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For Lorna

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Introduction: Entertainment and the City

In February 1908, the star attraction at Pickard's Panopticon, a variety theatre on Glasgow's Trongate, was the Auxetophone, a new gramophone system that played the latest recordings by the opera singer Luisa Tetrazzini and the comedian Harry Lauder. Ten years earlier, in 1898, audiences could have seen Harry Lauder himself on the same stage, not yet the great star he was shortly to become, but a rising Scottish comedian topping the bill. Nor was the hall itself quite the same: in 1898 it was still called the Britannia, the old 'Brit', the longest-established music hall in Glasgow. But the change from featuring a live performer to a recorded reproduction of his voice, in which the novelty of the technology became the main attraction, was highly significant. (For Lauder personally it was arguably the making of his career, as the phenomenal international success of his recordings catapulted him to stardom with audiences as far afield as North America, Australia and South Africa.)

Between the two dates—from the 1890s to the 1900s—a change occurred which rendered music hall entertainment available to wider audiences. Part of it indeed involved new technologies—gramophones and talking machines, bioscopes, kinematographs and primitive sound film systems such as the Gaumont Chronophone—which began to demonstrate the potential for music hall entertainment to reach a new mass audience, mediating what was performed on the stage for an audience outside and beyond the auditorium.

Not that this was appreciated at the time. The new devices were largely regarded as mechanical novelties. A newspaper claim that the Auxetophone was 'the loudest talking machine in existence' and could be heard in the open air for a distance of twenty-five miles provoked a letter to the editor from a man living only twenty miles outside Glasgow: he had been disappointed so far, but asked the managers to try again as he wanted to hear Lauder's 'Stop Yer Ticklin' Jock'.[1] The quality and sophistication of the sound was also an issue. Plans for Glasgow Corporation to use a Pathe Frères disc machine for concerts at the City Hall claimed that it 'sends forth the human voice or orchestral piece as distinctly as the original delivery', and was so powerful as to be easily heard in a hall four times the size of any in the city.[2] But overloud delivery in the wrong acoustic could be disastrous; equally so live: a group of performers from the Britannia giving a music hall concert in Dumbarton were reminded to 'accommodate their voice to the size of the room' and that they were 'not on the top of Ben Lomond'.[3]

However, the impact of these technologies was not the sole agent of the change but symptomatic of something wider. What had happened to music hall was a process of commodification, in which an entertainment that had its roots in older popular forms became in time the focus of a modern entertainment industry. At its height in 1914 the number of music halls in Glasgow had risen to eighteen, with six theatres, from respectively five and three in 1868.[4]

As the product of the urbanisation of British culture in the early nineteenth century, music hall was arguably a perfect expression of the society that produced it, not only in developing as an industry along capitalist lines, but in embodying what was the determining social and cultural trend of modern urban society—cosmopolitanism. The term itself carries a raft of associations and meanings: in the broad sense cosmopolitanism involves openness to a wider range of influences and possibilities. On one level it connotes modernity—the latest fashions and styles, and through them innovation and new technologies. But more profoundly it relates to urban experience—to people coming together in new environments and circumstances of urban living. Judith Walkowitz, the author of a model study of cosmopolitan London, who defines cosmopolitanism as both an intellectual programme and a social and cultural experience, believes that 'in the late-Victorian period it gained new currency as a description of urban spaces and their cultural and social milieux'.[5]

If part of cosmopolitanism then is about experience of the city, which was central to music hall, it also relates to historians' views of the forces at work in shaping the landscape and relationships of Victorian cities. Simon Gunn, who has explored the development of industrial centres such as Manchester and Birmingham, has written that 'the nineteenth-century city was both progenitor and locus of the experience of modernity', and that 'urban modernity [thus] implied simultaneously the remaking of the city and the ways it was experienced, handled and managed'.[6] As a topical entertainment, music hall was all about city life and whatever was current; its songs and sketches providing a stream of content satirising and lampooning everything from well-known political personalities and sporting figures to contemporary styles and fashions, gender relations, and the scandals and causes célèbres of the day. But beyond this, music hall and its performances offered an insiders' perspective on the city based on collective experience; as Patrick Joyce expresses it:

> The songs themselves frequently addressed urban experience, providing a sort of commentary on city life, but also a kind of 'conduct book' for the poor in terms of managing the everyday problems of city living.[7]

This sense of music hall embodying the lived, tactile experience of town life, of where to go and what to do—what Peter Bailey calls 'knowingness' and Joyce refers to as 'townology' (—and what Maurice Chevalier would have called *savoir faire*)—makes it a key proponent of cosmopolitanism and an important resource for studying urban entertainment culture and the processes by which it developed. But this street-wise cosmopolitanism of knowingness and savvy, rooted in the city, as well as accessing modernity also drew on older cultural inheritances and traditions—traditions rooted in pre-industrial urban life. At what point did these older traditions and new influences intersect, and to what extent did music hall in Glasgow, Scotland's great industrial centre, represent the meeting of the rich Scottish popular theatre tradition with new influences from south of the border in England and from dynamic cultural markets such as America?

In this respect, another key aspect of cosmopolitanism was receptiveness to new cultural influences from outside, which offered what Richard Sennett has termed 'the experience of diversity in the city as opposed to a relatively confined localism'.[8] This cultural cosmopolitanism was evident in a general sense in wider British fashion and theatrical and popular culture—for example in new musical and dance styles such as minstrel shows,

plantation songs, the cancan, cakewalk, ragtime and honky tonk and jazz idioms. But it also had a particular immediacy in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Glasgow, where the presence of communities of Irish, Italian, Jewish, Russian and eastern European immigrants brought economic competition for jobs and housing and presented challenges to social cohesion and the processes of integration in the city's rapidly developing society. Given these tensions, what role did stage representation of these communities and their ethnic characteristics in the city's music halls play, positive or otherwise, in forming perceptions of, and attitudes towards, these groups? And in the reflexive aspects of such cosmopolitanism, how did such ethnic stage representations contribute to links with communities in the Irish and Scottish diaspora overseas?

In exploring these issues this book centres on the career of a particular Glasgow music hall—the Britannia in the city's Trongate, later known from 1906 as the Panopticon, which opened in Christmas 1859 and, except for several brief interruptions, remained in more or less continuous operation until its final closure in 1938. Although in British theatre history the name Britannia is usually synonymous with the Britannia Theatre, Hoxton, a tumultuous 4000 seat working-class venue memorably described by Dickens, Glasgow's Britannia—a music hall rather than a theatre—was, in the context of that city's entertainment development, and for the generations who passed through its doors, no less iconic. In fact the Glasgow Britannia's role as a city landmark extended over several distinct phases of familiarity. Referred to as the 'old Brit' as early as the 1880s, its twentieth-century redesignation as the quasi-scientific Panopticon ('all-seeing' or 'see all') was quickly reclaimed to the vernacular by local working-class audiences as the 'Pots and Pans', or just 'the Pots'.[9] The hall survives today, on the upper floors of an elegant Victorian building, and is one of the oldest remaining music halls in Britain.

Although the Hoxton Britannia has been the subject of academic study, notably in Clive Barker's pioneering research on the social composition and theatre-going habits of London audiences,[10] recent work in popular theatre has increasingly stressed the extent of regional and local variations. Dagmar Kift has written that in terms of culture and behaviour, 'London […] was in no way representative of the whole scene', just as it could be argued that 'there was no clear relationship between the authorities and the music hall either at a national or local level, but rather a multiplicity of relationships depending on the specific social and political structure of each locality'.[11]

This book will therefore use the example of the Britannia music hall, and later the Panopticon, as both a case study and as a prism through which to explore the development of popular urban entertainments in Glasgow between the 1850s and 1930s. It will look beyond the building to its audiences and performers, to gain as wide an insight as possible into the social milieu of music hall and its functioning. The aim will be twofold: to provide a narrative of the hall's development as a commercial entertainment business, which evolved in ways which reflected the changing patterns of entertainments in the city; and, secondly, to explore the extent to which the Britannia came to reflect, through its stars, songs and performing material, as well as its modes of operation, and representations of ethnic groups, the life and culture of the city and the audiences it served. So the Britannia will be interrogated as both an example of the development of a specific music hall business, one which can be examined in the context of a distinct Scottish music hall culture and industry, and as a window on the popular culture of its times.

The purpose is to explore music hall not in isolation but in the broader context of the expanding city-centre market with which it interacted and competed. Music hall was at the forefront of this fast-emerging urban entertainment scene, which, as opposition to leisure relaxed in the second half of the nineteenth century, rapidly developed into a commercial entertainment sector based on popular theatre and fairground-based rides and shows. I aim to show how Britannia managers like Brand and Rossborough paved the way for the new industry and, by adopting astute strategies to win the trust of civic authorities, made the case for commercial entertainments as an accepted part of the fabric of city life. This was no small task; proof of the difficulty of earning and retaining the support of licensing bodies, even in our own infinitely more permissive society, was supplied by the recent demise of The Arches, an award-winning Glasgow arts venue forced to close in 2015 when, as the result of complex circumstances, it lost the confidence of the police and licencing authorities, despite having previously enjoyed good relations with both and protestations of support from the Scottish government and Creative Scotland.

A further object is to provide a much needed exploration of the cultural cosmopolitanism that music hall provided through links between its audiences and performances and a range of different communities and constituencies; its diasporic links to other Irish immigrant centres in the UK, as well as to Ireland and to communities in North America, which saw a constant circulation of songs and performers between the old and

new worlds; the connection between turn-of-the-twentieth-century stage representations of Jewish identity and the Jewish community in Glasgow with the influence of North American centres like New York; and the association of new technologies and innovations in popular entertainments with America, a fascination fuelled by American films, music and popular culture which saw American styles constantly referenced and imitated.

In framing this approach to the Britannia, I have been influenced by two key themes: the debate over the role of popular culture in music hall generally; and the issues of representation of Scottish identity and culture which bisect it when dealing with the issue of music hall's development in Scotland. The first of these concerns the nature of music hall as a genre, and whether it was an autonomous expression of popular culture, or purely a commercial mass entertainment devised to exert hegemonic control. Marxist historians, unable to recognise popular entertainment as a legitimate expression of working-class culture until E.P. Thompson's 'Culturalist' approach allowed it a limited rationale, have regarded music hall as a means of social control. Most notably, Gareth Stedman Jones characterised it as part of a defeatist urban leisure culture in which the disillusioned London working classes sought solace following the failure of attempts to advance their conditions through trades union activity and mainstream politics.[12] While this 'culture of consolation', as Stedman Jones termed it, has remained highly influential, recent writers have been more open to the possibility of working-class agency in music hall's development. Peter Bailey, while agreeing that music hall's emergence 'can be read as an analogue of the capitalist transformation of industrial manufacture', also suggests that it offered a degree of continuity with older forms, through 'the preservation and transmission of forms and styles of popular culture that might otherwise have succumbed to the repressions and reforms that threatened the recreations of an earlier working class'.[13]

More recently, views of popular culture have shifted in emphasis in a direction that reflects new currents in the development of cultural history. While the issue of hegemony remains, characterisations of a dialectical struggle have been largely superseded by a more variegated reading of the processes by which popular culture evolves. In Jacky Bratton's view:

> In music hall, and in the uses made of music hall materials outside the theatres themselves, the Victorian and Edwardian social consensus can be seen in the process of creation and modification. The dominant ideology —the generally agreed set of assumptions and values by which those in power

are able to maintain their position—rests always upon constant, multitu-
dinous renegotiations about what it is right and sensible to think and to
believe. The music hall, a powerful force in nineteenth and early twentieth
century culture, was bound to be an important site of these hegemonic
negotiations.[14]

Bratton's approach, broadly shared by Bailey and Dagmar Kift, reflects a
new appreciation of the depth and complexity of the cultural negotiation
afforded by music hall—a complexity vested in the interaction between
performers, audiences, songs and performing material, and mediated in
each case by a range of factors reflecting the circumstances of the par-
ticular performance—its scale, locality, the socio-economic context of the
venue, admission prices, etc.

   This awareness of the rich social interaction in music hall chimes with
the movement within cultural history to embrace a wider range of meth-
odologies and perspectives in telling the stories of the past. Peter Burke's
writing on popular culture, with its stress on pluralities, warns against 'the
misleading assumption of the homogeneity of a given society or period',
and sees the role of the cultural historian being 'to reveal an underlying
unity (or at least, underlying connections) without denying the diversity
of the past'.[15]

   In the case of Scotland, these debates about popular culture are com-
plicated by a second series of arguments which concern their relationship
to Scottish cultural and national identity.

   Music hall has a particular relevance to this discussion due to the historic
circumstances of theatre's development in Scotland. The marginalisation
of professional theatre for extended periods following the Reformation of
1560 produced a robust performing culture that, when it finally flowered
in the late eighteenth century, was firmly characterised as popular and
vernacular—rather than aesthetic or literary. As a result music hall, and its
sister form pantomime, were regarded as much closer to the cultural main-
stream, and therefore central to discussions of national representation and
identity, than was ever the case for their English counterparts.

   Recent writers continue to find the definition and charting of what
can be termed 'national' theatres and the theatrical cultures that pertain
to them highly problematic. Erika Fischer-Lichte asserts that, given the
discrediting of a universal concept of history, the future of research lies in
a number of different culture-oriented approaches, centred on issues such
as daily life, gender, anthropology and the history of emotions. Rejecting

the notion of the possibility of national history, she cites the example of German national theatre, which given its enormously varied cultural and experiential history, renders the purely 'national' influence on its development too diffuse and secondary to other determining factors or criteria by which one would logically investigate so diverse a historical genesis.[16]

What Fischer-Lichte says is of direct relevance to Scotland: first, because of the ongoing debate about the state of Scottish nation and nationhood, in relation to the historic impact of the union. And second, because in terms of Scottish theatre history, there is a strong sense that Scottish theatre is identified with the popular.

If Fischer-Lichte finds fault-lines running laterally across theatre history, others remain more open to the possibility of a narrative, albeit ones made problematic by inherited dichotomies. In her recent work, Jacky Bratton has asserted that the historiography of European theatre has suffered from the influence of a set of reductive binaries which have cast 'low' popular theatre against a classical 'literary' drama. In its British manifestation, Bratton contends that this process dates from 1830, when what she terms 'a battle for the literary appropriation of the stage' by prevailing hegemonic interests was to have a profound affect on the development of British theatre.

> It was in the 1830s that the field became defined and its procedures set up so as to mark limits as to what theatre is, and to establish it as a system of difference—text and context, high and low, the written drama and the materiality of the stage.[17]

One result is 'the British critical assumption […] that commercialised entertainment is the Other of the art of theatre'.

Bratton acknowledges that since the 1960s researchers have sought to redress the balance by exploring popular performance, from folk and popular culture influences and including music hall and melodrama. But while she regards this binary division between 'the popular' and the theatre of art as a historical phenomenon, 'a necessary condition of the successful hegemonic control of the theatre' by those who instituted it,[18] its continuing influence in the framing of modern theatre culture, and the very language of the discourse all serve to emphasise the gaping disparities that exist in the case of Scotland. It serves rather to point up the very different social complexion and connotations of theatre-going habits in Scotland in which music halls like the Britannia were to emerge. In fact, notwithstanding

references to a 'British' National Theatre, Scotland's own National Drama—a canon based on the works of Walter Scott, which came into its ascendancy in much the same period (i.e. 1810s–50s) that Bratton sees as marking the beginning of the appropriation of 'British' theatre history by hegemonic interests—was simultaneously both literary drama *and* popular theatre. On one hand it was associated with what was widely viewed as a golden age of the legitimate Scottish stage, with W.H. Murray's accomplished seasons at the Edinburgh Theatre Royal from 1809 to 1851, which set new standards for training and ensemble performance, the 1819 production of *Rob Roy* being a much-quoted landmark. Yet on the other, it also combined its literary sensibility with a wide popular appeal based on its narrative dynamism, integral use of music and songs and richness of characterisation. It was probably for this reason that broadsheet versions of Scott's novels by which the stories were further popularised were often based on stage adaptations, so well did they transfer to the demands of narrative-led popular theatre.[19] Barbara Bell suggests that, by providing a rich gallery of characters, who spoke dialogue that was fresh and lively, often in dialect, Scott deserved credit for hastening the abolition of the restrictive patent in 1843 'by immeasurably raising the standards of the minor theatres with this gift of a semi-legitimate repertoire with which they might challenge the supremacy of the Patent houses'.[20] Moreover, once established, the National Drama enjoyed, at least for a short period, a genuinely broad-based, socially heterogeneous audience, as 'the plays, once past their first wave of popularity, became increasingly anchored in working-class venues, at the same time as the major houses retained their allegiances to the genre'.[21] Admittedly this did not last. But following the decline of the stock companies at Scottish patent theatres from the 1840s, this National Drama became the focus of a vivid fairground play-going tradition that flourished in the context of tented booths and geggies (wooden and canvas travelling theatres), well into the twentieth century. Indeed the repertoire survived into the interwar years in heavily sentimentalised readings, *Rob Roy* being performed at the Panopticon, the former Britannia, in a barnstorming version in the 1930s.[22]

While the National Drama had a considerable influence on both the course of Scottish theatre and the development of music hall, I have cited its example to illustrate a broader point and another important theme: that, far from being inflicted with a divided theatre culture along the lines Bratton describes, in Scotland the 'literary' and popular stages were, if not one, at least far closer in their relationship to one another.

This set music hall in quite a different relationship to theatre. Indeed, the values of modern Scottish theatre are strongly rooted in a popular vernacular tradition traceable back to its fairground roots. Moreover, external factors meant that the wooden and canvas travelling theatres and their itinerant companies remained an important influence well into the twentieth century. The introduction of the 1843 Theatres Act, which ended the monopoly of the patent Theatres Royal to perform plays, was contemporaneous with the advent of rail travel, which enabled touring companies from England to visit Scottish theatres. The resulting dispersal of resident Scottish companies from the 1840s, saw much professional activity again revert to the travelling fairground circuit. While the city centre theatres became identified with fashionable cosmopolitan genres imported by these touring companies, indigenous Scottish theatre, such as it was, in terms of works featuring Scottish themes and language, was again largely vested in the fairground context which represented many people's experience of theatregoing in the nineteenth century. Alasdair Cameron identified the robust style of performance that developed from this context, based on the values of the National Drama, as the key influence on future Scottish theatre, suggesting that:

> its mixing of genre, its use of music, its direct audience involvement and above all its use of Scots, lived on in Pantomime, Variety and Music Hall, and this tradition eventually fed back into the mainstream of Scottish Theatre in the twentieth century.[23]

This popular tradition, from which much of the character of present-day Scottish theatre stems, was rooted in the counter-cultural spirit and ethos of the 'Minors', in a robust style of popular performance traceable through music hall, pantomime and variety, to the plays of Joe Corrie and Glasgow Unity in the interwar years, the radical theatre of John McGrath, 7:84 (Scotland), and Wildcat in the 1970s, and in the populist voice of the Citizens' Theatre and Bill Bryden's community-orientated works such as *The Ship* and *The Big Picnic* in the 1980s.[24] In Scotland therefore music hall was not an upstart form threatening to upset the equilibrium of an established classical, literary tradition, but much more of a natural extension of the mainstream. For this reason music hall's sister form, pantomime, has been termed the true national theatre of Scotland.

This narrative of the spirit of Scottish theatre as residing in the popular stage, at times suppressed and marginalised by religious prejudice and, by

extension, English cultural imperialism, but surviving in popular genres which place it at the heart of national culture, has gained wide acceptance with theatre historians, although recent work by Ian Brown has suggested that the extent and impact of religious disapproval on the development of drama has been much exaggerated.[25] No doubt part of the narrative's appeal lies in its subversion of the class assumptions of the English model, and its affirmation of the Scottish theatre as being, through its association with 'low' theatre, of the authentic mainstream of national culture.

However, the double-edge of music hall's populist association has been its twentieth-century identification with a derogatory portrayal of Scottish identity projected by the stereotypical figure of the Scotch comic. Damned as 'damaging and politically negative', its associated trope, Tartanry, is similarly condemned as having 'trivialised, distorted and sentimentalised Scotland's self-image in a particularly grotesque manner'.[26] While these attitudes, which date back to Hugh McDiarmid's enmity for Lauder, are an established feature of socialist and nationalist historiography, more recently writers have sought to rehabilitate the Scotch comic figure as an attempt to provide a consensual composite image of Scottish identity.[27]

While issues of Scottish identity will be explored in Chap. 3, it remains intriguing that debates over Scottish self-image should often divide along similar fault-lines to those involving popular culture and commercial mass entertainment: radical Scottish theatre companies from Glasgow Unity to 7:84 have celebrated the popular lineage of Scottish music hall and variety, drawing strength and credibility from their perceived roots in authentic working-class culture (Keir Hardie, an enthusiastic singer of Scots songs, finished his fiftieth birthday celebrations with friends at the Second International in Amsterdam in 1907 in a local music hall, being entertained by a Scots comedian).[28] But nationalist critics have tended to blame the debasement of the Scotch comic image on their reading of music hall as a manufactured commercial genre.

However, beyond the attraction of its retrospective significance within the radical, egalitarian connotations of wider Scottish theatre, little has actually been done to look in detail at the process by which music hall came into being in Scotland, the situation of pre-existing entertainments and cultural pursuits, and the means by which changes were negotiated in what was a period of considerable urban growth and transformation. To explore this, we shall use the Britannia as an exemplar of the music halls of the late 1850s and assess its development in the context of wider developments in urban entertainments.

In investigating this, the book's argument will be framed by the two debates which I have discussed: first, the question of whether music hall can claim to be considered as a genuinely autonymous expression of popular culture, as opposed to a commercial entertainment genre instigated by managers. And second, the extent to which music hall in Scotland represented a distinct Scottish form, to the extent of embodying or tapping into a Scottish popular theatre tradition.

But alongside these questions, and in parenthesis to them, I will also use the Britannia to explore how music hall—both generally and in this particular hall—developed at the forefront of a new entertainment market, and in a new urban context that, in terms of economic development and the role of the expanding industrial city, shared many of the same cultural influences with industrial society in England and in other countries, most importantly the United States.

In drawing on these contextualising debates, I will argue that the Britannia offers a distinctively different model of music hall development to that identified in London and in northern English cities, and an important contribution to the debate over the extent to which commercial urban entertainments represented a continuity with older forms. Although located in a major cosmopolitan industrial centre, and, at least in the first phase of its operation, at a high status within its professional music hall milieu, the Britannia remained culturally much closer to older semi-rural amusement traditions associated with Glasgow Fair. For all the modernity of managers' promotional rhetoric, a modernity that has sometimes been picked up on in the over-reverencing of the financial model of syndicated capital investment, I suggest that, in tone and function, the entertainment itself remained in many respects very similar to what had gone before.

This continued affinity with older amusement culture became, if anything, more evident in the 1900s, when the Britannia's slide downmarket led to the shedding of remaining rhetorical pretensions concerning improvement, and a renewed emphasis on older sporting and amusement culture. This produced a final, consciously self-referential phase of activity in the 1920s and 1930s, which saw community engagement coalesce around older amusement traditions, such as raucous amateur nights, and a relaxed sociability which represented a rolling back of the once vaunted precepts of rational recreation.

If this provides the outline narrative, I will also be exploring a number of propositions relating to particular aspects and phases of the Britannia's operations.

Chapter 2 describes Glasgow's urban environment in the decades preceding the Britannia's opening in 1859, in terms of its popular and entertainment culture, surrounding topography, public spaces and street life, to evoke a sense of place and an impression of what the area around Trongate felt and sounded like. The chapter will also examine the Britannia's first phase of development, from its opening in 1859 until 1900, in relation to a key theme—improvement: the moral ideology of rational recreation that was a driving force in Glasgow's mid-nineteenth century municipal politics. The chapter will explore how during the hall's first decades its managers adopted the language and rhetoric of rational recreation to smooth their commercial path in their relations with the police, licensing authorities and progressive middle-class opinion.

Exploring themes of hybridity and the making of modern Scottish identity, Chaps. 3 and 4 will examine music hall's function in relation to the Irish and Jewish communities in Glasgow, which had contrasting experiences of immigration: while the Irish were a major presence in the city from the 1840s, and central to its professional music hall culture, the East European Jews that arrived from the 1880s constituted a smaller group mainly located in the Gorbals area south of the Clyde. Exploring these groups, through their presence in audiences and their stage representations in music hall performances, I will argue that reductive stereotypes like the stage Irishman and 'Hebrew' comedian, while offering provocative and often bigoted depictions, nevertheless fulfilled an important socialising role by providing a basic purchase on these identities for indigenous Scottish audiences.

Chapter 5 continues the Britannia's narrative into the twentieth century, when the growth in leisure that took place from the early 1900s, although sometimes prematurely identified with the rise of cinema, also saw the sophisticated development of large-scale fairground amusements in city-centre showgrounds, whose managers were active partners in the capital investment in entertainments that was a feature of the period up to 1914, and which was the defining theme of this phase of entertainment activity. Drawing on Tracy Davis's work on the economics of British theatre, it will also explore how during the Britannia's final phase, when between 1906 and 1938 it was known as the Panopticon, Pickard's astute management of the venue as a working-class hall, involving low investment and low profits, offered an alternative model to that of the top end of the market syndicated variety pioneered by impresarios like Edward Moss and Oswald Stoll.

Chapter 6 will analyse the results of a programme of recorded oral history interviews with subjects, now in their seventies and eighties, who remember visiting the Panopticon as children in the 1920s and 1930s. Drawing on their recollections of the hall, and of the entertainments culture of the surrounding area of the Trongate and Argyle Street, it will use elements of the ethno-history methodology that Annette Kuhn utilises in her book *An Everyday Magic*: *Cinema and Cultural Memory* (2002). An important aspect of Kuhn's approach is the privileging of memory, for the imaginative patina it brings to subjects remembered—in the case of this research, from childhoods more than seventy years ago. As Kuhn writes:

> Memory is regarded here as neither proving access to, nor as representing, the past 'as it was'; the past, rather, is taken to be mediated, indeed produced, in the activity of remembering.[29]

An important part of this chapter, that sees the broader thematic survey narrow back to the specifics of the case study, will use oral materials to examine the sense of community loyalty and well-being that the Panopticon engendered among local audiences in the 1920s and 1930s. Then in its final phase as a declining cinema and variety theatre, by modern standards very much a theatre of poverty, it offered popular amateur nights, combined with daily film screenings to an audience mostly made up of children and 'modellers' from the local model lodging houses. Counter to the weight of expectation concerning the disenfranchising effects of the modern mass leisure industry, the chapter reconnects with the tradition of popular theatre as a celebratory manifestation of community-based popular culture.

NOTES

1. *Record and Mail*, 11 Feb. 1908; for letter see *Evening Times*, 15 Feb. 1908; viewable online on the Pickard's Papers website: http://pickardspapers.gla.ac.uk (hereafter prefaced BP): BP03.36 Scrapbook Page.
2. *Record and Mail*, 8 Mar.1907. BP02.02 Scrapbook Page.
3. *Dumbarton Herald*, 1 Nov. 1855, 2.
4. Figures from the *Era Almanack*. See Maloney, *Scotland and the Music Hall, 1850–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 223.
5. Judith R. Walkowitz, *Nights Out*: *Life in Cosmopolitan London* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 4–5.

6. Simon Gunn, 'The Middle Class, Modernity and the Provincial City: Manchester c.1840–80', in Alan Kidd and David Nicholls (eds.), *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle Class Identity in Britain 1800–1900* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 112.

7. Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom. Liberalism and the Modern City* (London: Verso, 2003), 207.

8. Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 135–7; quoted in Judith Walkowitz, 'Urban Spectatorship', in Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski (eds.), *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004), 205–10.

9. Several subjects of recorded interviews for this research who attended the hall as children in the 1920s and 1930s had never heard of the Britannia.

10. Clive Barker, 'The Audience of the Britannia Theatre, Hoxton', *Theatre Quarterly*, 9:34 (summer 1979), 27–41; also Jim Davis and Tracy C. Davis, 'The People of the "People's Theatre": The Social Demography of the Britannia Theatre (Hoxton)', *Theatre Survey* 32:2 (November 1991).

11. Dagmar Kift, *The Victorian Music Hall: Culture, Class and Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 12, 181.

12. Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Working Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870–1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class', *Journal of Social History*, 7 (summer 1973–74), 460–508.

13. Peter Bailey, 'Custom, Capital and Culture in the Victorian Music Hall', in Robert Storch (ed.), *Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth-Century England* (New York: Croom Helm, 1982), 180–208, here 202, 199. In his later writing Bailey also accepts music hall's dual role as both an expression of working-class culture and a commercial mass entertainment. See particularly 'Conspiracies of Meaning: Music Hall Song and the Knowingness of Popular Culture', *Past and Present*, 144 (Aug. 1994), 138–70.

14. J.S. Bratton, Introduction, *Music Hall: Performance and Style* (Milton Keynes: Open University, 1986), xi.

15. Peter Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History* (London: Polity Press, 1997), 201.

16. Erika Fischer-Lichte, 'Some Critical Remarks on Theatre Historiography', in S.E. Wilmer (ed.), *Writing and Rewriting National Theatre Histories* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2004), 1–17.

17. Jacky Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 10–11.

18. Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History*, 16.

19. Barbara Bell, 'Revisiting the National Theatre Debate: Once More, With Feeling …', *Edinburgh Review 105*, Theatre in Scotland (Edinburgh 2000), 5–14, here 10.

20. Barbara Bell, 'The Nineteenth Century', in Bill Findlay (ed.), *A History of Scottish Theatre* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1998), 137–206, here 142.

21. Bell, 'Revisiting the National Theatre Debate', 10.

22. Howard & Wyndham mounted a Scott centenary season at the Theatre Royal Glasgow in 1932, of adaptations with interpolated songs, with *The Heart of Midlothian* retitled *Jeanie Deans*, and played up to a tartanised patriotic sentiment that reviewer Jack House found deplorable; see *The Scottish Stage*, July 1932.

23. Alasdair Cameron, 'Scottish Drama in the Nineteenth Century', in Douglas Gifford (ed.), *The History of Scottish Literature*, *Volume 3*, *Nineteenth Century* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), 429–42, here 439.

24. Indeed the debate over the form that the proposed Scottish National Theatre should take, which has seen it eventually adopt the model of a mobile commissioning organisation in preference to that of a building-centred institution, is perhaps also a reflection of a subconscious reluctance on the part of Scottish theatre to renounce its radical, counter-cultural status.

25. Playwright Robert Kemp's 'particular theory was that the theatre in Scotland had not been destroyed in the dark night of the Reformation: rather it had gone underground into the "low theatre" or music hall'; Arnold Kemp, 'The Bourgeois Bohemian', *The Scottish Review*, 23 (Autumn 2000), 35. Historians of radical postwar theatre have also been quick to claim the legacy of music hall as indicative of a popular theatre lineage: Femi Folorunso suggests that Scottish variety was 'from its introduction until the late 1940s … the most popular and richest form of entertainment in Scotland' and 'occupied the middle space in a direct line from the seventeenth-century popular entertainment to contemporary drama in Scotland'; Folorunso, 'Scottish Drama and the Popular Tradition', in *Scottish Theatre since the Seventies*, ed. Randall Stevenson and Gavin Wallace (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 177; see also Ian Brown, 'Celtic Centres, the Fringes and John McGrath', in *Freedom's Pioneer*, ed. David Brady and Susanna Capon, 86–99 (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2005); and Linda Mackenney, *The Activities of Popular Dramatists and Drama Groups in Scotland*, *1900–1952* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000). On the overstatement of post-Reformation suppression of drama, Ian Brown makes a strong revisionist case against what he terms 'the canard of the theatre-hating kirk' in his chapter 'The Historiography of Scottish Drama' in his *Scottish Theatre*: *Diversity*, *Language*, *Continuity* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2013).

26. Elspeth King, 'Popular Culture in Glasgow', in *The Working Class in Glasgow*, *1750–1914*, ed. R.A. Cage (Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1987): 142–87, here 169; W. Hamish Fraser, 'Developments in Leisure', in *People*

and Society in Scotland, *1830–1914*, ed. Hamish Fraser and R.J. Morris (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1990): 236–64, here p. 257. For tartanry see also Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain* (London: Verso, 1981), Colin McArthur (ed.), *Scotch Reels: Scotland in Cinema and Television* (London: BFI, 1982).

27. Alasdair Cameron and Adrienne Scullion, 'W.F. Frame and the Scottish Popular Theatre Tradition', in Cameron and Scullion (eds.), *Scottish Popular Theatre and Entertainment* (Glasgow: Glasgow University Library Studies, 1996), 39–61; David Goldie, 'Hugh McDiarmid, Harry Lauder and Scottish Popular Culture', *International Journal of Scottish Literature* (www.ijsl.stir.ac.uk) I (Autumn 2006), 1–26.

28. William Martin Haddow, *My Seventy Years* (Glasgow: Robert Gibson, 1943), 119, 127.

29. Annette Kuhn, *An Everyday Magic*: *Cinema and Cultural Memory* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 9.

The Britannia Music Hall, 1859–1905: 'Improvement'

Although it continued into the twentieth century, music hall is very much associated with the Victorian age—an era and a period that for modern readers carries with it a whole raft of connotations: of huge technological innovation, commercial dynamism and inventiveness, the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation, the rise of modernism and cosmopolitanism, and of new consumer styles and fashions. While music hall reflected and embodied aspects of all these developments, equally importantly it also involved the adaptation of entertainments from older forms into new urban contexts, in the process adapting them to the consumerism and materiality of Victorian society. From catchy popular songs to the experience of the good night out, music hall was to become the centre of the Victorian popular entertainment experience in a way that was both modern and all about what was fashionable. But it simultaneously offered an experience of collective class-centred conviviality that was completely authentic in the way that it echoed and connected with older patterns of entertainment.

Part of this process of mediation involved overcoming strong religious opposition to entertainment of any sort: indeed one of the other strongest connotations of the Victorian age is a stern religious sensibility—a puritanism—that sharply conflicts with the beery hedonism that the world of music hall evokes. (Our own lurid Ripper-inflected association of music hall with the gas-heated reek of booze and cigar-smoke and the gaudy jangle of the dulcimer was probably echoed and magnified in the imaginations of evangelical ministers, with an added gloss of moral depravity.)

In Scotland, deep-rooted Presbyterian disapproval of entertainment was tempered by reformers concerned with improving the social and moral circumstances of the working classes, who insisted that, human nature being what it was, working people must be allowed opportunities for leisure or enjoyment. As an 1856 newspaper article put it, 'Men of all shades of opinion appear to have arrived at the conclusion that recreations of some description are absolutely indispensable … the only question remaining for solution is, of what this description is to consist', adding 'all of course are agreed that they must be innocent in their character and tendency.'[1] When initial attempts to provide educational diversions for the working classes—in the form of dry penny lectures offered by mechanics institutes—proved hopelessly unpopular, progressive voices warned that the failure drove them to seek 'enjoyments of a coarse and degrading character'. Pointing out the destructive effects of ministers condemning all types of entertainment, including the most wholesome and innocuous, they warned that when even 'the cheering song, and healthful and morally elevating domestic dance have been frowned upon by many as ungodly and soul-ruining … the pent-up stream of human happiness has bought, in not a few instances, free passage in the abodes of folly and vice'.[2]

Although these debates were underway in the 1850s, the decade in which music hall emerged, this disapproval of entertainment and anxiety about the morals and leisure pursuits of the working classes remained a strong influence in Scottish society throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. It is hard for us now to imagine the vehemence of this opposition. William Ross, Minister of Cowcaddens in Glasgow from the 1880s, 'hated the theatre and all its works and ways with a puritanical intensity, and believed its influence to be mainly for evil', finding that 'even at its best it made for an unhealthy excitement and destroyed the balance of human nature'. His son and biographer explained this was due to amusement of any kind being so alien to his father that he 'perhaps scarcely understood or sympathised with the needs and desires of ordinary unregenerate human nature in this respect'.[3] The fact that the son, writing in 1905, felt the need to explain this suggested the change in attitudes that had taken place since. Yet in 1897 the patrician industrialist Lord Overtoun was still urging members of the Dumbarton Young Men's Christian Association to 'not allow sinful pleasure to dim the lustre of their lives'.[4] Evidence of this residual prejudice against entertainment persisted well into living memory.[5]

Given this climate of hostility, how did the managers of the Britannia and its rivals establish music hall in the city as an accepted and highly

profitable popular theatre format—one that in the space of a generation went from being disreputable to a mainstream part of Victorian commercial and popular culture?

As I have stated, this book will use the Britannia as a case history to examine how music hall in Glasgow developed as part of a rising urban entertainment industry. But as well as exploring how music hall, as the new popular theatre format, chimed with the modernity of Victorian culture—in contributing to the rise of a new leisure market and embracing fashion and commercial and technological innovation in its acts and marketing—this chapter will first explore how music hall managers in Glasgow managed to confront and circumvent the antipathy to entertainment that was such a longstanding and deep-rooted feature of Scottish society. I will suggest they did so by outflanking reforming opinion by embracing aspects of improvement.

In the context of this intense moral concern, and the strategies managers adopted to make their venues acceptable to reformers and progressive opinion, the chapter will examine the Britannia's development through its relationship to improvement, the reforming ideology that provided the dynamic impetus for Glasgow's municipal government from the 1840s. The term perhaps needs defining: in the wider sense improvement meant the moral impulse to improve the lives and conditions of the population, particularly the working classes; in entertainment, it translated into the promotion of what was termed rational recreation, or constructive leisure pursuits that included sports and the arts.

Against this vision of improvement, I will argue that the Britannia's development represented part of an ongoing struggle between older amusement culture and the forces campaigning for moral reform, a struggle which, by the time of the Britannia's opening at the end of 1859, had already been underway for the more than thirty years. I also suggest that the Britannia was representative of a wider cultural change or adaptation of older forms in the face of social pressure and that, rather than a new commercial genre, in terms of the entertainment it presented, and the audiences it addressed, it represented a negotiated continuity of older forms. In other words, the Britannia represented a repackaging of older entertainments, rendered acceptable to authorities in its new formation by a number of mitigating factors: its commercial operation and management as a business, which articulated its worth in a market context; its proprietors' demonstrable social control over their audience, which could be attested to by police and licensing authorities; its adoption of modes

of respectability in its functioning, timetabling and so on; and above all, its receptiveness to the language of improvement, through its operation, layout, décor and tenor of behaviour. I also suggest that the key issues of debate between older cultures and modes of behaviour and those of the moral reformers were vested in the character of the immediate locality, and in the physical context of the Britannia's environs, the surrounding area of Argyle Street and Trongate, that took in Glasgow Cross and the old entertainment quarter of the Saltmarket and Glasgow Green.

In developing these arguments, I will first examine the pre-conditions of the Britannia's emergence and the social and political context in which music hall developed in Glasgow in the 1830s and 1840s, a period which coincided with the emergence of the various reformist movements. I will then explore the existing fairground and tavern-based entertainment culture of the period, and the extent to which the topography of the area surrounding Trongate and the Saltmarket came to feature as sites of tension over the place of public and private spaces.

To first explore the wider context, between the 1830s and 1850s Glasgow underwent enormous demographic change and expansion. In 1821 Glasgow's population had overtaken that of Edinburgh. Between 1801 and 1841, its population increased by three and a half times, rising from 77,385 to 274,533.[6] From the 1830s the expansion of the railway network, and growth of heavy industries like engineering and shipbuilding were mirrored by the beginnings of middle-class movement out to new suburban areas to the south and west, where lands for Kelvingrove Park were acquired in 1852.

Following the successful introduction of the Scottish Reform Act of 1832, working-class political radicals in Glasgow became increasingly active in the expanding area of municipal and parliamentary politics. With an agenda that included repeal of the Corn Laws, temperance and further political and social reform, and with the lesson of the Bonnymuir rising of 1820—that failed attempts at insurrection carried a terrible price—firmly behind them, the Chartist and subsequent movements saw their objectives as attainable through political processes. In the early 1840s Chartists began to be nominated for the Police Board and, in 1848, the sitting Lord Provost was defeated by a radical candidate, James Moir, in what was widely seen as a popular protest against the magistrates' mishandling of the Bread Riots earlier in the year, in which three men died. This new shift in political affairs was to see a Liberal political consensus built around a commitment to moral and social improvement take effective control

of Glasgow's municipal politics between 1843, when the disruption of the church caused the Tories to self-destruct, and 1868. This shift was reflected in wider cultural changes.[7]

These political pressures and tensions were also reflected in the city's cultural politics. The Theatre Act of 1843 had removed the monopoly of the holder of the royal patent, which resided in the Theatre Royal, Dunlop Street, to mount productions of drama—here meaning plays that consisted of speech uninterrupted by songs or music. But while the former manager, John Henry Alexander, had been famously quick to resort to litigation to protect his rights from rival impresarios, the terms Legitimate and Minor theatres were anyway deceptive. While the division had never been about scale of operation, the largest of the semi-permanent 'Minors' that appeared on Glasgow Green during the annual Fair were substantial structures that held several thousand people. Managed by well-known impresarios like David Prince Miller and John Henry Anderson, the 'Wizard of the North', and offering companies with leading 'star' actors and actresses of the day, they represented considerable investments. In 1845 Anderson announced the building of his new City Theatre, a partially brick-built structure that would hold 4000–5000 people and was to be situated in front of the prison on Glasgow Green, therefore on common land. This scheme, which became characterised as the blatant appropriation of public land for commercial purposes, with the connivance of the city authorities, and at a time when issues of free trade and protectionism were hot issues of public debate, resulted in a petition against the new theatre which attracted 60,000 signatures. Tracy Davis has examined the political aspects of the case, ultimate confrontation over which was forestalled when the Theatre was destroyed by fire.[8] Davis quotes Clive Barker's view that the conflict between the Patent and Minor theatres 'could well be examined in the light of a new rising class striving to take over the cultural institutions of its predecessors and of a clash of economic principles and ideologies'. However, while the Minor theatres were generally associated with the anti-monopolistic, anti-establishment cause of the working and manufacturing classes, she suggests that the City Theatre case was in fact far more complex: that it ultimately concerned questions of ownership of the common land, an acutely sensitive issue for the working classes at the time, and that Anderson's scheme, which involved a conspicuously handsome, well-appointed building, amounted to a deliberate attempt to attract middle-class audiences, 'its opulence bod[ing] an increase in middle-class encroachment on the neighbourhood, running contrary to

the trend towards theatres and music halls embodying exclusively work-ing-class aspirations and ideals'.[9]

The theatre monopolies case, as it was called, certainly proved 'a tin-derbox of class conflict'. In fact it was far from coincidental that the issue of public rights to the Green had provoked such heated dispute. Tensions over questions of public and private spaces reflected a growing awareness of the importance of spatial factors in relation to the need to improve urban conditions.

The discussion of these spatial issues by groups of religiously-inspired social reformers needs framing by an awareness of the unique influence they exerted on Glasgow's municipal politics from the 1830s. Although such groups were active in many industrial cities, Glasgow was exceptional in that religious and social reformers played a dominant role in its municipal governance from that period until well into the twentieth century, giving it a distinct moral perspective. Termed 'arguably the most innovative centre for religious voluntary organisations in the English-speaking world',[10] the city fathers' interventionist approach to the alleviation of social depriva-tion reflected the direct application of moral principles espoused by these groups. As Hamish Fraser has written, 'The flowering of Glasgow munici-pal enterprise in the 1850s and 1860s, from waterworks and gas works to slum clearance, lodging house building and hospital construction can-not be understood without reference to the development of a religiously-inspired civic gospel.'[11] Just as their influence permeated most aspects of civic life, so their moral opinions and attitudes were to have an important influence on the development of Glasgow's urban entertainment culture.

The various movements which emerged to advocate moral and social reform in the 1820s and 1830s all to varying degrees identified the problems they faced with the physical environment, and spatial implications, of the decaying inner city. Religious evangelicals, inspired by the charismatic Rev. Thomas Chalmers, who spent a formative period in Glasgow in the 1820s, attributed what they saw as the breakdown of society to the disastrous effects of industrial urbanisation.[12] However, although Chalmers' disciples viewed their task as essentially one of 'moral regeneration', and sought to improve the spiritual climate for the young through the introduction of Sunday schools, the inter-relationship between the appalling conditions in which many of the working classes lived, and issues of health, sanitation, poverty and destitution was increasingly evident. The temperance move-ment, which emerged in Scotland in the late 1820s, and whose mem-bership overlapped considerably with the evangelicals, similarly believed

that the root cause of social problems was widespread alcoholism, which reached its peak in the 1830s. By the 1850s, in Hamish Fraser and Irene Maver's view, temperance 'increasingly became the preserve of middle-class evangelicals who, with characteristic determinist logic, believed that all of Glasgow's social ills could be overcome by total abstention'.[13]

Moral reformers essentially believed that the solution to social problems lay in cultivating individual spiritual self-reliance among the urban working classes, but recognised the need to alleviate social hardship as a precondition to achieving this. As Robert Buchanan put it, 'Spiritual religion cannot thrive in an atmosphere foul with corruption.'[14] However, their demands were lent substance and urgency by the growing evidence of public health campaigners. While social problems might be morally based, the increasing scientific linkage of insanitary housing conditions and bad water with the threat of disease—demonstrated by Glasgow's cholera epidemics of 1832, 1848–49, and 1853–54 – caused the municipal authorities, with evangelicals at their forefront, to institute a sweeping programme of slum clearances under the terms of the City Improvement Act of 1866. If the public health argument was now compelling, religious and moral reformers had in any case long appropriated the straightforward, cleansing metaphor of ventilation to, as Hamish Fraser and Maver put it, 'clear the slums, [and] bring light, order and cleanliness to the community'. In this vein Buchanan, the dynamic minister of Tron Parish, which included the dense, insanitary labyrinth of closes between Trongate and Saltmarket known as the Wynds which the Britannia site adjoined, typically likened the establishment of his school in Old Wynd to 'a well dug in the wilderness, an oasis appearing in the moral desert'.[15]

The moral discourse, and that concerning public health— which respectively viewed the cleansing effects of light and air as spiritual metaphor and scientifically-prescribed remedy—were joined by another, concerning the social principles that should govern the spatial relationships of the city. Public-minded architects similarly appreciated the importance of urban planning, and particularly of attitudes towards the control of public spaces, in diffusing social problems and class-based conflicts. Architectural historian James Schmiechen writes that:

> Glasgow architect James Salmon discussed the social and political benefits of good urban design within the context of what he called the 'architectural economy' as a way of addressing the 'impending danger of the city's health and morals'.[16]

In response, Glasgow's architects developed:

> a new, deliberate and consciously thought-out visual iconography—a language of architecture which acted as a link between the prevailing socio-economic and political thought and the physical environment. The function of art and architecture was to 'build bridges'.

The resulting system, termed 'social functionalism', identified the key interactive public space—and subject of reform—as the Glasgow street, which it divided into two categories: 'the highly public "open" thoroughfares, which encouraged inter-class exchange', and the 'segregated or "enclosed" residential street, which […] served to protect and maintain class interests'.

Social interaction was also to be an important consideration in the 1866 City Improvement scheme. Influenced by Haussmann's designs for the urban reconstruction of Paris, city architects allowed for a series of open spaces or 'places', and for the formation of small squares at street intersections.[17]

By the 1850s, then, the period of music hall's emergence, a broad consensus of planners, public health officials and religious and temperance reformers all associated overcrowded insanitary conditions with illness, disease and social deprivation, and healthy conditions with light, airy, well-ventilated housing and, beyond that, moral purification.

However, the application of such principles could become socially prescriptive. While Argyle Street, a mile long and famous throughout Europe for its elegant lines and splendid shops, was one of the city's great 'open' thoroughfares, the huge crowds that thronged it presented a challenge. Just as in the evangelical and temperance schemes, where cultural forms associated with the modern urban landscape were assumed to be dysfunctional and corrosive, so Schmiechen suggests that 'street congestion also invited undesirable social interaction, and thus massing in open space was tolerated only as long as it conformed to accepted social standards and could act as a "social bridge" between the classes'.[18] Examples of such 'undesirable' interactions included the driving of market animals, the keeping and selling of pigs and cows, obstructions caused by selling goods, 'street crime, dirt, noise and smells'. If reformers, planners and city authorities saw public spaces in these terms, as 'open' areas where class interaction could take place, but only on the basis of sanctioned enactment of respectability, then how did the wider street culture of the city feature?

What has been termed 'the re-invention of the street' during the process of urban expansion saw arterial thoroughfares like Argyle Street become increasingly regulated as conduits for traffic in and out of the city, their spaces subdivided over the course of the nineteenth century between pavements for pedestrians and the central roadway for wheeled and horse drawn vehicles, omnibuses and trams.[19] But newly recreated city centres also offered myriad opportunities for drama and diversion, both in the form of human interactions and the sociability of the crowd—what Richard Sennett has termed 'the gastronomy of the eye'—and in the theatricality of the city itself as 'a kind of monumental stage set'.[20] In this a parallel role of city centre boulevards was as provider of free spectacle in the form of shop windows displaying the huge range of fashions and manufactured goods that were drivers of Victorian consumerism. In the popular imagination of the music hall song 'The Sights of Glasgow', the reason Argyle Street was 'so beautiful and gay', was as a place of endlessly diverting spectacle and consumer choice:

> Where novelty in every shape abounds both night and day
> While crowds into the arcade drop to gad about and gaze,
> On Pastry, watches, German flutes, wax dolls and women's stays.[21]

Fashionable warehouses—proto-department stores that turned over huge quantities of goods—did enormous business on public holidays, when the pressure to gain entrance was sometimes so intense that admission was ticketed and many were turned away.[22] (Over two days of the New Year holiday in 1860, the period of the Britannia's opening, the nearby Polytechnic warehouses received 25,000 and 15,000 visitors respectively, with 50,000 pop guns reportedly sold.)[23] Such crowd-pulling attractions made shopping streets like Argyle Street magnets for the expanding entertainments market, and for music halls like the Britannia and its rivals. But if city centres were now, as Simon Gunn suggests, 're-cast as a focus for consumption and display, performance and ritual', the modernity and opulence of splendid new warehouses and emporia only served to point up contrasts with the older pre-industrial townscape.

GLASGOW FAIR AND THE SALTMARKET

At its less fashionable eastern end, cosmopolitan Argyle Street turned into, first, Trongate and then to the decidedly less salubrious Glasgow Cross, the decaying heart of the old city centre. The character of this area, between Trongate, Glasgow Cross and the Saltmarket (Map 2.1)
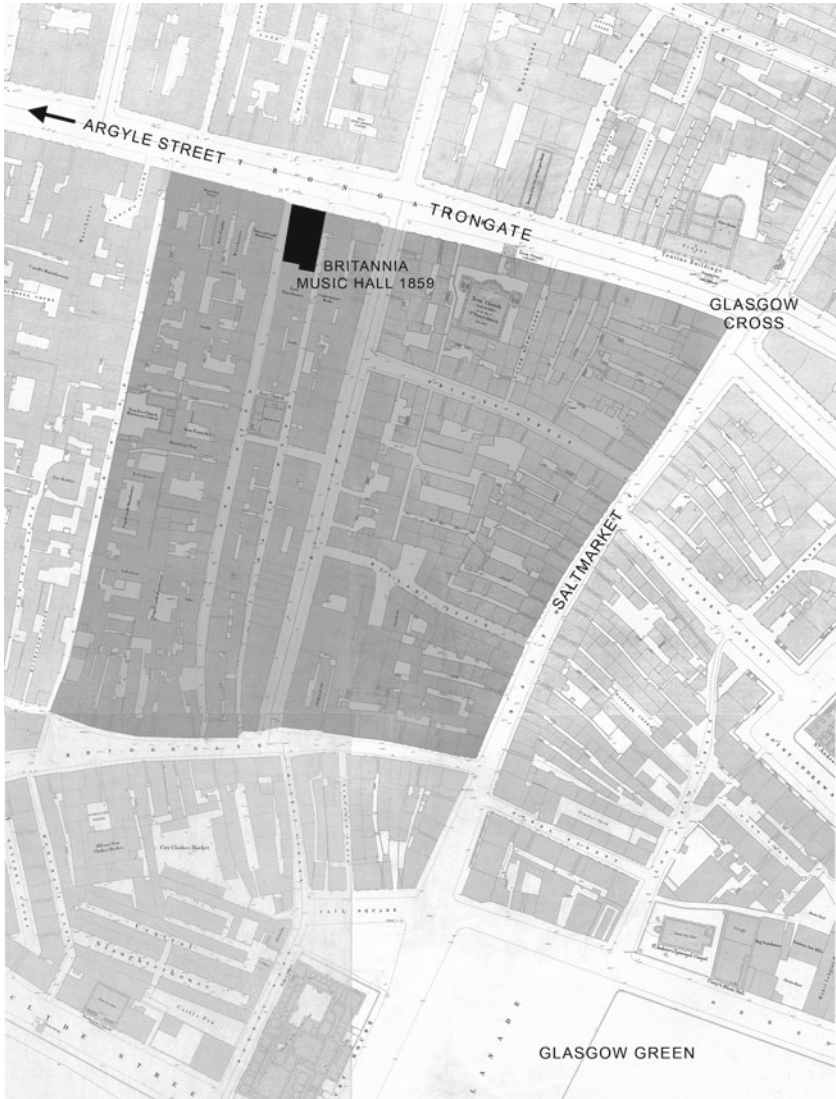
Map 2.1   Trongate and the Saltmarket, 1857. Tron Parish boundaries shown *shaded*. Town plan of Glasgow: surveyed 1857–8/Ordnance Survey (Image courtesy of the University of Glasgow Library)

was closely bound up with its role as the city's entertainment quarter and home to Glasgow Fair. In the 1840s and 1850s, its old semi-rural connotations as historic centre were also evident in the continued presence of agencies governing the visceral basics of life: the slaughterhouse, the barracks and the Jail Square, where executions were held, and which gave onto Glasgow Green, the traditional place of public protest and assembly.

The area of the old town and its base functions presented reformers and progressive-minded opinion with their greatest challenge. In the first instance, the large-scale public gatherings it hosted showed the crowd at its most primal and excessive. Public executions, or 'Hanging Days', were public holidays which attracted enormous numbers, when 'those who wanted to get a good view of the execution generally stayed out all night to see the scaffold brought round from Clyde Street', and 'all the publicans about Saltmarket did a roaring trade, the general topic discussed in bars and tap-rooms being the execution, some bragging they had not missed an execution since they were so high'.[24] At the last public execution, held as late as 1865, 20,000 people saw the poisoner Dr Pritchard face the drop.

The traditional holiday periods of Christmas and New Year, and Glasgow Fair in July also brought enormous crowds to the Saltmarket. The Fair had initially been held at the Stockwell Gate, before being relocated to Glasgow Green from 1820. Its entertainments, which included everything from the wooden and canvas travelling theatres known as 'geggies', to circuses, menageries, shooting galleries, acrobats and musicians, to all manner of wild beasts, freaks and wax-works, were underpinned by copious drinking, and frequently led to ritualised violence, as in the thuggish game of 'downing the Barney', common in the 1830s, in which any Irishman caught straying inside the quadrangle of drinking booths on the Green was promptly set upon and beaten up by the 'king mob'.[25]

The Fair's impact was not restricted to entertainments on the Green and the Saltmarket. The surrounding streets were choked with stalls and vendors, and taverns and singing saloons stayed open all night to meet the demand. The Superintendent of Police reported that during Fair week 'public houses were usually open 20 hours a day for the seven days and that entire neighbourhoods were kept awake by the noise', while up and down the Saltmarket extemporised venues offered 'penny reels' dancing to a fiddler.[26] This climate of excess, typified by heavy drinking, brawling and casual violence, represented everything most abhorrent to middle-class sensibilities. Most galling was the fact that this immoral behaviour was both sanctioned by the municipal authorities, and encouraged and

exploited by publicans for their profit. By the 1840s, the Fair's anti-social presence was seen as increasingly anachronistic as, in Irene Maver's words, 'the temporary release of social inhibitions associated with Fair-time jarred increasingly with the mood of temperance and restraint in the city'.[27]

These offensive manifestations of the 'open' street culture—the spectacle of enormous crowds attending executions, or indulging in week-long drinking at fair-time—represented a constant threat and challenge to the middle classes, who were acutely aware that drunken behaviour could quickly escalate into civil disorder, as in the recent Bread Riots of 1848.

While the 1846 furore over the City Theatre demonstrated the strength of public sensitivity about public ownership of the Green, the occasion represented the highpoint of socially mixed attendance. The Fair subsequently went into sharp decline, with the large theatres disappearing in the 1850s and by the 1860s the range and quality of entertainments had markedly deteriorated.[28] However despite persistent pressure from local churchmen, the strength of public support meant that the Fair persisted on the Green until 1870, when it was removed to a showground in Camlachie to the east. Even after that date middle-class reformers' concerns to utilise public parks as spaces for leisure and development of social cohesion continued to provoke a debate which often polarised around social divisions between the western and eastern sides of the city.[29]

If the Fair was untouchable in the mid-century, the Saltmarket itself constituted a different challenge to reformers. Outside holiday periods the area was the city's entertainment quarter, due to the constant presence of booths, shows and street attractions, but more importantly to the concentration of taverns and singing saloons it housed. Located in the dense and insanitary network of wynds and closes that led off the Saltmarket, Trongate and High Street, these were, with the exception of one or two larger proto-music halls, generally small establishments.

In popular imagination, and as its defining feature, the taverns *were* the Saltmarket. As city landmarks they gave their names to its closes, which, often containing up to five taverns, became known by the most prominent: so no.18 Saltmarket was the Waverley Close, no. 36. the Shakespeare, and no. 46 the Jupiter, while, on Trongate, no. 54 was the Rob Roy, or Rhodrick Dhu Close, no. 80 the Castle Danger, and no. 89, The French Horn. Indeed, in the 1840s drinking establishments were so numerous that they unexpectedly formed part of the informal provision for street lighting, there being 'so many taverns and music halls in Saltmarket with

large lamps at the door or at the close-mouth that there were only four public lamps from the Cross down to Princes Street'.[30]

These taverns and singing saloons, and their free and easy nights, provided the local origins of the Scottish music hall tradition, which was very much rooted in their convivial, participatory culture. They therefore form an important part of the chain of argument that locates music hall within the mainstream of pre-existing urban popular culture, rather than as a commercial imposition on the part of managers.

Although the Saltmarket taverns rapidly declined following the introduction of the Forbes Mackenzie Licensing Act of 1853, which abolished Sunday opening and established an 11 pm closing time, the reasons for their decline, and the specific qualities and character of this older tavern and saloon culture, are worth examining for their formative influence on the development of music halls like the Britannia.

In the first instance, the taverns were so closely identified with the wynds and closes of the Saltmarket that middle-class reformers saw them as part of the problem—the slum culture of disease and social deprivation that had to be eradicated. In this, the spatial prejudices of urban reformers played an important role in condemning the taverns. As we have seen, all the active promoters of social reform—moral and religious reformers, public health officials, and urban planners—associated the improving of the urban environment with the process of 'opening up' confined spaces associated with dirt and disease to the purifying effects of light and air. This was very much rooted in physical experience of conditions in the old town: Tron parish, the area of ten square acres bordered by the Old Wynd, Trongate and Saltmarket (Map 2.1) in which more than ten thousand people lived, was described by its minister, Robert Buchanan, as 'one dense block of buildings—a solid square'. While Buchanan saw his objective as 'letting in … the light and air of heaven', the planners of the 1866 City Improvement Act that began the move to clear the wider area envisaged streets based on 'a largely rectangular grid of light, space and air', and the introduction of open spaces, or 'places', on the Parisian model. In contrast, taverns, after the fashion of the eighteenth century howff, tended to comprise small, enclosed spaces or irregular-sized rooms, and were reached up a common entrance or 'close', all features that condemned them by association.

The few first-hand accounts of such saloons in wider circulation in the 1850s, reflecting the reporters' reforming agendas, tended to perpetuate the association between enclosed spaces and social deprivation. *Midnight*

Scenes and Social Photographs, published in 1858 by Alexander Brown, writing as 'Shadow', depicted the grim conditions of the city centre, including the area around Saltmarket, Trongate, High Street and Glasgow Cross, through descriptions of a series of night-time visits to shebeens, brothels, lodging houses and singing saloons, in episodes with sub-titles like 'Visit to a Low Brothel', 'Drunken Mother and Distressed Child', and 'Deplorable case of Drunkenness'. Although the reportage was ground-breaking in its attempt at an anthropological style, it established an image of the singing saloon—and by extension, music hall—as belonging to a nightmare world of low-ceilinged, subterranean chambers populated by criminals and prostitutes. A series of sensational articles published in the *North British Daily Mail* in 1871 as 'The Dark Side of Glasgow' helped further cement these perceptions. These lurid associations, and the portrayal by association of working-class leisure culture as alcohol-driven and dysfunctional, were to have a profound influence in shaping middle-class perceptions of music hall for a generation.

The question for modern researchers is to what extent these depictions corresponded to wider reality? A contrast to these accounts is provided by a series of newspaper articles by James Anderson, published in 1888. Entitled 'The Auld Saltmarket: Its closes, taverns and saloons', these supply an insider's recollections of the area in the late 1840s, written by 'one born under the shadow of the Cross steeple', who 'as a boy in his play ran through all the closes in the Saltmarket'.[31] Two features emerge strikingly from Anderson's rich and detailed accounts of what seems a very different world. The first is that many of the taverns described were small and domestic in scale and atmosphere. The Scots Grey at no.18 Saltmarket, 'kept by the widow of a sergeant', consisted of 'the little old-fashioned bar, the bar parlour, kitchen and large public room'. Reflecting the fact that proprietors lived in, premises were often comfortably furnished, and meticulously kept. At the Old Waverly Tavern in the same close:

> Smart waiting maids attended the customers. The stairs were whitened down every morning, the mahogany handrail polished, and also the brass rods which sparred the glass door. The windows to the front were kept scrupulously clean, with neat white blinds on them.

The entertainment provided in what were by the late 1840s nascent music halls mirrored this domestic scale. At the leading singing saloons such as the Shakespeare ('the premier house in town' where 'all the crack vocalists

of the day' appeared), the Jupiter Saloon and the Sir Walter Scott, the per-
formers, although paid, were not yet 'stars' in the later music hall sense of
being beyond the company of managers and audience. The proprietor of
the Sir Walter Scott had 'a room and kitchen off the bar' where 'his favourite
customers and the artistes used to mingle'. At the Nightingale Singing
Saloon in the same close, vocalists congregated in the public room, which
served as a kitchen, and where there was no standing on ceremony: 'when
the landlady made a pot o' kale, all the professionals got their bowl aboot'.
A strong company sense prevailed at the Nightingale: the comedian, Wee
Bauldie Bain, was infirm, the pianist and violinist were both blind, and
the two waiters were expected to do a turn. Moreover the house 'was
frequented by a lot of good amateurs', which 'kept the ball rolling till
twelve at night'. While Anderson singles out certain unlicensed venues for
notoriety, the general impression is of orderly, well-run establishments and
a 'respectable' atmosphere.

The second striking aspect of Anderson's articles was the range of types
of tavern, and the sheer diversity of social and professional groups who
used them. There seems to have been an establishment for almost every
sport or professional sub-culture. So rowers went to the Ayrshire Club or
to the Exchange Tavern, run by Scottish champion sculler Bob Campbell,
at 37 and 25 Trongate respectively, while followers of pugilism or 'Fistiana'
attended the Union Tavern, frequented by ex-pros like the Tipton Slasher,
where the proprietor arranged sparring bouts at the Lyceum Rooms; or
went to Jock Goudie's at Seaton's Close in Trongate, where prize fights
were held, along with cock and dog fights. Horse betting centred on
Norman Buchanan's. Unlicensed 'Night Houses' catered for those who
worked unsocial hours: journalists, policemen and detectives frequented
that run by Tom O'Neil, known as the 'Midnight Publican', while the
staff of the *Sentinel* newspaper frequented the Rhoderick Dhu, and the
Bank Tavern was famous for its Bank Burns Club, the meeting place of a
revered circle of songwriters, lyricists and poets. While several taverns were
frequented by drivers and guards of stage coaches, others served as offices
for the recruiting sergeants who frequented the Cross, the Cottage Tavern
acting as base for the East India Company, while on Pension Monday
the Royal Military Rendevous at 36 Trongate was guarded by a six-foot
dragoon, immaculate in jangling spurs and sword, and highly-polished
helmet.

Anderson's Saltmarket recollections are of course subjective, and their
impact needs qualifying in several respects. In the first place Anderson

himself was a well-known comedian from the late 1860s who crops up later in the Britannia narrative, and therefore arguably had an interest in propagating a flattering retrospective view of the sociability of these establishments. Aspects of the tavern culture would in any case have declined naturally due to social developments. For example, one of the reasons the taverns had remained so numerous—he numbers them at forty—was the area's role as the hub of the coaching trade, which constantly delivered new customers but was bound to disappear with the coming of rail travel. The gaming and field sports on which many establishments relied also became less fashionable from the mid-century. Moreover, for all Anderson's golden age evocations, the rapid deterioration of the old town area from the 1830s was likely to have produced a falling off in the quality of the taverns. However, Anderson's articles are nevertheless extremely important in balancing the often bleak depictions provided by temperance reformers. His descriptions of tavern culture suggest a vibrant and diverse social infrastructure that catered for a wide range of different interests and groups. While temperance accounts stress depravity and dysfunction, Anderson's describe convivial games of draughts and 'Catch the ten', egalitarian free and easies where performers include school teachers and kirk preceptors, a socially diverse clientele ranging from musicians, journalists, actors and artisans to butchers, bakers and bricklayers; and courting rituals of lads treating lassies to 'pies and porter or "cuddle my dearie" (lemonade and raspberry vinegar)'.[32]

Moreover, this model of an informal, working-class leisure culture sits convincingly alongside evidence of the area's busy local cultural economy, which ranged from broadsides and chapbooks, produced by local printers and sold in the streets by 'flying stationers', to song books, ballads and 'Saltmarket literature', and the products of the Poet's Box in St Andrews Lane, a music shop which could provide music and lyrics for any song sung in the neighbouring singing saloons like the Shakespeare and Odd fellows.[33] The coming of music hall saw the growth of local music publishers like Daniel Barr's in Schipka Pass, further emphasising the extent to which the new form represented a continuity with older practices. Anderson's articles also emphasise the extent to which the form of music hall evolved from the extemporised free and easy entertainments held in the Saltmarket taverns, into the singing saloons, as the larger establishments were termed. In the process they also give the lie to later industry narratives which sought to distance the new music halls from what was portrayed as the disreputability of these earlier entertainments.

The rapid decline of this infrastructure began with the introduction of the Forbes Mackenzie Act in 1853, which abolished Sunday opening and established an 11 pm closing time. Many long established taverns lost their licenses, while others that were unlicensed fell victim to the more rigorous enforcement of the new legislation. Those that survived disappeared in the slum clearance schemes that resulted from the Glasgow City Improvement Act of 1866, the terms of which ensured that licensed premises were not permitted to re-establish themselves in the area.

However, as we have seen the Saltmarket taverns were a key influence on the development of future urban entertainments, and of music halls like the Britannia, both through their development of music hall entertainment as a genre, and in the cautionary example of their fate at the hands of the licensing authorities.

Notwithstanding the legislative changes, the old tavern culture had declined for several reasons. The first was that, as temperance and evangelical reformers were unable to countenance any kind of social role for establishments involved in the sale of alcohol, they failed—or refused—to distinguish between categories, regarding licensed and unlicensed as equally ungodly. Over time, this evangelical reading came to form the basis of wider middle-class opinion. The irony was that many of the small parlour-style taverns that disappeared following the 1853 act had offered just the values of warm, responsibly administered sociability that evangelicals claimed had vanished from urban society. A legacy of the eighteenth century, the older tavern culture had provided venues for working- and middle-class interaction, where business could be done, sporting, literary and musical societies could meet and couples do their courting in a convivial atmosphere. Its disappearance left the working classes with few places of resort except those run by evangelical voluntary organisations. The new larger public houses that replaced them—soulless drinking venues, where women were not welcome, and which discouraged social interaction at the expense of 'perpendicular drinking'—represented a regressive development in social terms.[34] In this context, the subsequent emergence of music hall as a popular form in which working-class audiences held sway, had about it an element of cultural reclamation.

As music hall began to emerge in the early 1850s, the Saltmarket's decline offered a warning to managers in the new field, many of whom, like John Brand, the Britannia's first proprietor, had gained their early experience in its singing saloons. Not least was the example of the way that taverns' location in older buildings, with smaller rooms, had been used to

associate them with the wider slum culture. In middle-class imaginings, smaller rooms and confined spaces smacked of corruption and depravity, a suspicion fuelled by the imagery of both Shadow and the Dark Side of Glasgow series.

How aware the middle classes actually were of the Saltmarket taverns, and the contribution they made to working-class life by the 1850s seems anyway debatable. Hamish Fraser and Maver suggest that, following the deterioration of the city centre in the 1830s, churchmen began to stay away, with the result that 'there was a growing unwillingness by middle-class deacons and elders to penetrate the netherworld of Glasgow's slum districts'.[35] Callum Brown's detailing of the extent of evangelical activism, and of voluntary organisations promoting Sabbath schools and church attendance in areas like the Tron parish, suggest that missionaries must have been apprised of the world of the taverns. But the fact that evangelicals knew about aspects of the taverns' operation did not mean they comprehended the social world they embodied. Reformers may not have known what went on inside taverns and saloons but were sure that, whatever it was, was bound to be unhealthy and immoral. The lesson—that perceptions were all important —was one which the Britannia's managers would exploit in their own dealings with reformers and municipal authorities. The Britannia's relationship with improvement was to involve a more considered accommodation of middle-class perceptions.

Taken together, the approach to and conception of space embodied in the strategies of reformers and planners—of the need to ventilate, open up and cleanse, to purge the streets of smells and dirt associated with rural life, and to restrain the social drinking habits of the populace—all had profound implications for the older popular culture of which the Britannia was a product. In fact the Britannia, as an accommodation between older forms and middle-class reformers, itself represented a 'social bridge', by which older entertainments could continue in adapted form, not in the 'closed off' sense of subterranean vaults and cellar saloons, but rather in the context of a visible, and thus regulated, controlled commercial business.

Having explored the cultural and topographical contexts in which music hall evolved, and the influence reforming opinion exerted in Glasgow's morally interventionist municipal culture, I will now examine the Britannia's own development. I plan to explore this in relation to two themes which resonated with social and political ideas of the period: first, the notion of improvement, in all its forms, from beliefs in rational recre-

ation through different phases of municipal involvement, and evangelical and temperance movements; and, second, the commodification of leisure, and the expansion in the demand for entertainment with which music hall and variety increasingly became identified. It was an expansion which naturally led on to the premise that entertainment constituted a market in its own right, and one which came to connote modernity and the range of cosmopolitan influences associated with fashion and fashionability.

In using the Britannia's narrative to explore these themes, I shall focus on two events which seem to represent key developments: H.T. Rossborough's refurbishment of the Britannia in 1869 and its reception by the press, and Arthur Hubner's period of management in the late 1890s, which saw the Britannia consolidating its position as a working-class hall.

THE BRITANNIA MUSIC HALL

Although by the 1850s there were a number of music halls in Glasgow, the Britannia's opening signals a new phase in terms of scale and commercial operation. The immediate origins of the music hall format itself came from 'free and easies', informal 'harmonic evenings' or singalong sessions held in rooms in pubs or taverns, presided over by a chairman, in which customers took turns to sing songs with the whole company joining in with the choruses. While, as we have seen, larger licensed establishments offering this entertainment, known as singing saloons, had been operating for many years in the Saltmarket, and owed much to the conviviality of the old participatory musical culture, the area's decline and the rise of music hall as a fashionable working-class entertainment combined to produce several developments: the opening of new, larger music halls in adjacent city centre areas, and a new disparagement of the old saloons by managers of a nascent music hall industry anxious to distance itself from their disreputable associations.[36]

One of the first press references to the Britannia came in the London-published theatrical journal the *Era*, which on 4 December 1859 announced:

> There is a large hall, situated in the Trongate, in course of preparation, and will be opened by Mr Brand, of the Old Odd Fellows' Saloon, at an early date, as 'The Britannia Music Hall'.

The term 'preparation' reflects an ambiguity about whether the hall was new, or an adaptation of a pre-existing building or space within it. The

site, 101 Trongate, had previously been occupied by 'a large property' that contained shops, a City Parish Dispensary on the first floor, and above it, a number of flats and two 'swell houses of ill fame', or brothels.[37] This older structure was replaced by the building housing the music hall (Fig. 2.1), with its elegant Italianate façade by Thomas Gildard, which dates from 1857.[38] The theory that the building was intended to be a commercial premises but then converted was confirmed by a later account that stated 'The Britannia was built for a warehouse [effectively a department store], was then taken by John Brand, and altered into a music hall'.[39]

While the exact date of the new hall's opening is uncertain, it was planned to open on Christmas Eve, and was certainly in operation by early January 1860, when a report in the *Era*, which explained how continuous rain since the New Year had brought good business for the city's theatres and music halls, went on to itemise them. Venues listed included 'the People's Palace, Washington Friends' Panorama, the African Theatre Troupe, the Royal Parthenon, the Philharmonic, the Whitebait, the Shakespeare, the Colosseum, the Oddfellows, the Britannia, and a host of minor entertainments'.[40]

The Britannia was then born into what was already a highly competitive entertainment marketplace. On 22 January, the *Era* carried a brief description of the new hall, titled the Britannia Saloon, explaining that:

> Mr Brand having closed his old hall, the Odd Fellows, has now opened a very elegant establishment, capable of containing from twelve to fifteen hundred persons, under the above title. The design of the hall is good, and the decoration chaste. The stage is large, and the whole accommodation is ample and of a convenient description. Prices are not by any means high, and though the present company might bear improvement, yet a little addition would render it complete. […] Business during the holidays was immense, but has now lulled, although still good.[41]

A description of the entertainment offered at the Britannia appeared in April of the same year, when the *Era* correspondent, as part of his roundup of Glasgow music halls, reported dropping into the Britannia, where:

> we were amused by the comic songs of Mr McGown and the duos of Mr and Mrs Stephens. Mr McGregor Simpson electrified us with his Jacobite songs, Madame Henessier charmed us with a ballad, and the Misses Duvalli showed much proficiency in the terpsichorean art. Mr Spiers appeared to manage the musical affairs with much success.[42]

Fig. 2.1 Britannia Music Hall, 101 Trongate, Glasgow, c.1888. By this period titled the Britannia Variety Theatre. The lamps flanking the entrance were a characteristic of music halls. The posters either side of the doors are for J.A. Wilson, a popular Glasgow blackface performer known as the 'Black Oracle'. The Britannia Vaults occupy the ground floor left premises (By kind permission of the Britannia Panopticon Music Hall Trust)

John Brand, the Britannia's proprietor, was an experienced manager who had previously run the Oddfellow's, a well-known singing saloon located at 31 Saltmarket, and had taken parties of performers from there to give music-hall performances at Dumbarton.[43] While we know little else about him, Brand seems to embody the ambiguous relationship between alcohol and entrepreneurial interests that characterised much of music hall's development in Glasgow. The comedian W.F. Frame, who stated in his memoirs that he was at the opening of the Britannia, wrote that Brand had a Sunday steamer called the 'Petrel' and managed the hall for nine years 'on solid temperance lines'.[44] If this seems surprising, given Brand's background in the boozy world of singing saloons—he was recalled in song as 'a decent sort o' man/He often stan's a dram'—the Britannia's operation without a drinks licence chimed with other contemporaneous developments in 'dry' music hall in Glasgow.

On one level the debate about 'dry' music halls reflects the pervasive influence of one of the key reforming ideologies of the day—temperance. By the 1850s temperance was an enormously dynamic and influential popular movement, one driven by the belief that the working classes should be encouraged away from the temptations of public houses into more constructive pursuits. While these mainly involved sports and organised social activities, music hall's popularity soon led temperance organisations to promote popular concerts of their own in a bid to wrest working-class audiences—particularly men—away from what they viewed as the depravity of the music halls. The Abstainers' Saturday Night Concerts, which began at Glasgow City Hall in 1854, were joined from 1872 by the Good Templars Harmonic Association 'bursts', popular concerts featuring music hall performers alongside concert singers and instrumental soloists and ensembles, as well as by a wide variety of smaller temperance events—concerts, penny readings and fourpenny soirees. Many performers—like Frame—were themselves adherents, and by the 1860s local concerts and soirees such as those held at the Temperance Hall at 25 Trongate were an established part of the entertainment market, offering relaxed, convivial events at which many well-known Britannia favourites performed gratis.

If temperance represented a real threat, one Glasgow music hall manager sought to exploit what he saw as a gap in the market by embracing its practices. Six months before Brand opened the Britannia, James S. Baylis, manager of the Oddfellows saloon for fourteen years, leased a hall above the Milton Arcade in the Cowcaddens, a rough area north of the city

centre regarded as 'little short of a howling wilderness', and on 4 July 1859 opened it as the Milton Colosseum, offering 'popular prices, good companies and temperance refreshments'.[45] Baylis was described as 'a man of ideals as well as ideas [who] considered that an entertainment should be enjoyed for its own sake and not just as an excuse for drinking'. But how did this impact on music hall? The questions of refreshments aside, his formula sounds as much about value for money and a better ambience as about temperance, in that 'instead of five turns which were performed in the smoke-filled and reeking halls', Baylis provided 'sixteen turns, and the audience were able to give their attention to them'. However the opening performance began with the company singing 'Hail Smiling Morn', a glee used as a Christmas carol and hymn, and which was also popular in temperance versions and with the Band of Hope.[46] And on a personal basis the Baylises' temperance policy seems to have been rooted in personal conviction: James's widow Christina, who ran the Scotia for more than twenty years after her husband's death, wrote that she had 'never applied for the licence', and 'wouldn't have drink here for anything'.[47] In any event the new hall proved so popular that Baylis changed the name to the Milton Magnet, and then built the larger Scotia Music Hall in Stockwell Street, which opened in December 1862, as 'a working class hall on the teetotal plan'.

In a period when developments in this fast-moving market were shaped by dynamic entrepreneurial managers, Baylis and Brand were both products of the knockabout world of the Saltmarket. As proprietor of the Oddfellows, Brand was described professionally as a 'Spirit dealer', while Baylis, as a waiter at the Jupiter, had 'lost an eye through someone shying a soda bottle at him'.[48] Although Baylis and his wife were subsequently lauded as the founders of 'respectable' music hall in Glasgow, with the Scotia being described as 'really the pioneer of the modern first-class hall in Scotland', Brand's Britannia was broadly contemporaneous with Baylis' ground-breaking Milton Colosseum.[49] Brand's lower profile probably reflected a difference in emphasis to Baylis' model, in that rather than committing to temperance per se, his decision to operate without a drinks licence was entirely pragmatic. The fact was that for all Frame's flattering talk of Brand's management being 'along temperance lines', this was the result of necessity, as Brand had applied for a licence and been turned down.

The licensing climate at the time was in any case markedly hostile to music hall entertainment, something that was widely commented on. A

journalist imbued with the cosmopolitan spirit of the modern city mocked the licensing authorities for their parochialism:

> The bailies of Rothesay discovered that an enjoyment of flowers led to Sabbath desecration, and the justices of Glasgow have an idea that the pleasures of music lead to dissipation. They utterly ignore the belief that music hath charms to sooth the savage breast, and are clear that it has an effect totally different. Under this impression the greatest opposition has been given to applications for licenses to music halls. The Royal Music Hall and Whitebait are the only music halls licensed in the city, and enjoy a monopoly of business happily not misused.[50]

Brand's application for a license for the Britannia was refused by magistrates at the Glasgow Burgh Appeals on several grounds, summarised as: 'because he intended to convert the premises into a singing saloon; because he held a license for a singing saloon in Saltmarket; and because the saloon in Trongate would be an annoyance to neighbours'. At his appeal against the refusal in mid-December 1859, when the Britannia's 'Grand opening' had already been announced in *The Era*, a local ironmonger named McLellan presented a petition against the granting of a license, claiming 'it would have a tendency of lowering the value of the property'. In reply, Brand's lawyer stated his client was willing to give up his existing Saltmarket license, pointing out reasonably that 'he did not wish a spirits license' for the Britannia 'but simply a license to sell beer', and stated that in any case 'whether or not the license was got the premises would be a singing saloon. They had already been fitted up as such and would be opened on Christmas night.'. He concluded that:

> He was not there to argue in favour of singing saloons, but he thought if men would partake of liquor, it was better to do so listening to the sweet sound of music, than sitting in a low public house.[51]

Reported comments by magistrates made clear that this was missing the point, as the crux of concern was really the hall's location, and the fine balance between market forces and what was considered appropriate or desirable and where in the moral mapping of the city centre: as one put it, 'it might be an annoyance to have a singing saloon in Trongate, but he would rather see a singing saloon with a beer license in Trongate, than a singing saloon with a spirit license in Saltmarket'.[52] Brand's appeal was refused, by eleven votes to three, as was a subsequent appeal and attempts

to transfer his licence, in May and June 1860, after the Britannia was opened and operating.

Although Brand was desperate for a licence that was repeatedly denied him, the barrier to his audience having a drink was in practice easily circumvented: on the ground floor of the Britannia, adjacent to the entrance to the hall, which was on the upper floors, was a large pub—a separate business, initially called the Britannia Vaults, later Hillcoats Vaults. The fact that the music hall audiences would have been able to pass in and out to fortify themselves in the premises below, suggests the absence of a drinks license may over time have developed into a largely cosmetic arrangement to satisfy the regulatory preferences of magistrates and police. Moreover, for all the alcohol-fuelled rhetoric of music-hall culture—and there is no suggestion that Britannia audiences were any less raucous or boisterous than those at other Glasgow halls, or that the songs and sketches performed there were any less preoccupied with narratives of drink and its effects—the Britannia and the Scotia both enjoyed long and lucrative careers without apparently ever holding alcohol licences, at least for long periods. (This was confirmed by the fact that when the new management of the Gaiety applied for a drinks licence in 1891, the example of the two older halls operating without one was held up as a precedent.)[53]

In then establishing highly successful music-hall businesses without recourse to alcohol sales, Baylis and Brand both took considerable financial risks. Baylis' widow Christina remembered that 'people thought he was mad' to attempt to launch a temperance music hall and that 'he would lose every penny he had'. Although the Milton Colosseum proved a financial success, funding the building of the Scotia music hall, she later suggested that in establishing his business in Cowcaddens Baylis had been 'just a little before his time', in that his other theatre, on the site of the present Theatre Royal, which had cost £42,000 to build, was sold after his death for £38,500.[54] Brand too took a considerable financial risk in fitting out the Britannia. In his appeal against the refusal of the licence his lawyer—perhaps hoping to invoke the magistrates' sympathy—revealed that he had taken the lease for ten years at a rent beginning at £400 for the first two years, £500 for the second two years, and £600 afterwards.[55]

Although the magistrates' refusal of a licence was a serious setback for Brand, just as he was about to launch his new hall, and with a very large financial investment riding on the venture, his decision to press ahead and open in any case, which must have taken some courage, was highly significant. Unencumbered by any moral commitment to temperance, he

nevertheless realised that music hall's commercial potential now lay in the entertainment itself, to the extent that it was not worth jeopardising future profits for the lack of a licence to sell beer.

In this he showed a combination of acuity and pragmatism. By the time of the Britannia's opening there were already two licensed music halls—meaning halls licensed to serve alcohol alongside the entertainment—in Glasgow, Shearer's and Brown's, both opened in the early 1850s. The magistrates' hostility to entertainments was well known, and in applying for a license for a new larger music hall Brand may well have been acting more in hope than expectation. In choosing to open the Britannia without a drinks licence, rather than not at all, Brand was both keeping his eye on the bigger prize, in terms of entering the rising local music hall market with a large new state-of-the-art venue, and accepting the realpolitik of the city's licencing climate, which was unlikely to change in the short term.

The commercial sense of Brand's decision was borne out by events. The severity of Glasgow magistrates' licencing regime showed little sign of relenting in subsequent decades, and in hindsight had a highly detrimental effect on entertainment in the city. Ironically, one of the positive arguments put forward by Brand's representative in an 1860 appeal, when the Procurator Fiscal argued that there were already enough licenced premises in the neighbourhood, was that 'beer licences being given to such houses [i.e., music halls] might prevent the customers going to common public houses, where they would get drunk; unaccompanied by the beneficial influences of music'. In fact by the 1900s, some forty years later, the isolation of drinking from any sort of conviviality that it predicted had come to pass. The 'free and easies' that Frame recalled as offering a training ground for aspiring performers had largely disappeared by the 1880s. Whereas in Manchester in 1892 the vast majority of the city's more than 500 public houses offered weekly 'free and easies', often in adjacent 'singing rooms', in Glasgow blame for the joylessness of city centre hostelries was laid squarely at the feet of the magistrates.[56] Glasgow's pubs, 'garish, inhuman, unmerry places', were described as:

> purely shops for perpendicular drinking, for the Magistrates, in the interests of the young, have succeeded in making them places in which no man, from the fatigue of standing, will linger long. And this is the main reason why the 'sing songs' and 'cosies' which you hear of in Manchester are unknown in Glasgow. The Magistrates will not grant a music licence to a public-house.[57]

Brand's astuteness in 1859 was to realise that, with the rapid increase in demand, the commercial potential of music hall as entertainment now far

exceeded that of sales of food and drink. The old notion that the entertainment was there to generate sales of food and—most importantly—drink, was replaced by a new business model in which music hall itself was not only the main attraction and generator of profit, but was so potentially lucrative as to make jeopardising it over drinks sales nonsensical.

But if entertainment was where the profit lay, it was also important to conform to the new regulatory environment, and to the social mores of the time in order to secure stability and longevity. The solution was to demonstrate that music hall managers could deliver responsibly administered entertainment in ways that met the approval of morally concerned civic groups.

This factor, the willingness to forgo drink sales in order to capitalise on the commercial value of the entertainment, is one of several features that signal the Britannia as representing a new development in music hall in Glasgow. First, it represented a new scale of operation: not an expanded pub or licensed premises, it was, if not purpose-built, at least purposely-refurbished expressly for the purpose of offering music-hall entertainment, and was located not in an unfashionable district like Cowcaddens, but in what amounted to a key city centre location. Although the building itself was not originally intended to be a music hall, the elegance and workmanship of the Italianate façade arguably being extra to requirements, the management's ambition in securing so handsome a property, possibly as a speculative development, confirms its commercial ambition. Viewed in the context of Trongate and its imposing frontages, the Britannia's façade perhaps offered a competing statement similar to that of the ornately decorative 'Palazzo' warehouses that were a prominent feature of Manchester's city centre expansion from the 1840s.[58] With a capacity of 1500, the Britannia was substantially larger than existing 'pub' music halls.[59] Moreover its functioning on a temperance basis was a key indicator of the new primacy of the entertainment itself: it confirmed that the music hall was now of significant commercial value in its own right as to make renunciation of bar income worthwhile. The opening of the new hall to capitalise on the bounce of the Christmas/New Year holiday period, one of the two busiest periods of the year, also suggests commercial acumen.

The Britannia was therefore from the outset a capitalised, professional theatrical entertainment business, in a way that the older singing saloons, informally organised and orientated towards sales of food and drink, were not. If the hall's opening and initial operation identified it as a precursor of a new professional music hall culture, its next manager developed the hall's commercial potential still further.

Rossborough

In 1869 the proprietorship of the Britannia passed to H.T. (Hubert) Rossborough, formerly Brand's general manager, who remained lessee of the hall until his death in 1887, after which it transferred to his widow, Lizzie, who operated it until 1892. Rossborough was a typically cosmopolitan figure: American-born and believed to have been from a well-to-do Irish-American family, at the time of taking over the Britannia he was aged twenty-nine.[60] Like Brand, and typically for a music hall impresario, Rossborough also had a background in the drinks trade, having previously been a publican, the proprietor of H.T. Rossborough's Spirit Vaults at 11 St Enoch's Lane, a theatrical bar which was advertised as 'The Most Unique Establishment in Glasgow. Patronised by the Elite of the City', and which offered 'Free admission to the Gallery of Arts and Picture, containing the Portraits of all the popular Theatrical and Music Hall Celebrities of the present Age.'[61]

Although Rossborough, the key figure in the Britannia's success, only became lessee in 1869, he had experience of managing the hall for Brand for several years, while still running his licenced business. This experience, and the extensive refurbishment he then undertook suggest a professional knowledge of the local music hall market in Glasgow, which was both expanding and intensely competitive.[62] A verse of a contemporary music hall song by the comedian Harry Linn, a Britannia favourite, commemorating the transfer of ownership suggests that, while 'Jolly Mr Brand' had always sought to provide 'cheap amusement', Rossborough was setting out to raise the standard of the hall:

> Mr Rossborough, our manager, has ta'en the hall himsel'
> He'll bring you doon sic companies, the like was ne'er heard tell;
> He'll open't on a different plan frae it's ever been before
> You'll a' get in for naething—if you pay cash at the door.[63]

The occasion of Rossborough's reopening of the Britannia coincided with a series of reports of the city's music halls that appeared in the *Glasgow Sentinel*, a progressive weekly published by the Owenite journalist Alexander Campbell. The descriptions contained in these accounts, and as importantly the language employed, tell us a great deal about the character of these rival venues—the Britannia's competitors—and what Rossborough's commercial motives might have been for the refurbishment.

While the Britannia, although situated on the upper floors of a building, was a conventional hall in its layout, its competitors, longer established and

located close by, included a range of very different types of venue. One in particular, the Whitebait Concert Room, commended for 'the enjoyment of good music and a warm tumbler during wet winter evenings', provides an interesting contrast to Marvin Carlson's observations on the value of a theatre frontage entrance onto a thoroughfare later in the century.[64] In fact the *Sentinel* correspondent states that 'to those who do not know its whereabouts there is some difficulty in finding an entrance. One door leads from St Enoch's Lane, and another from St Enoch's Wynd, both entrances being only a few doors from Argyle Street.' Moreover, once inside it, the Whitebait is a warren:

> By a short flight of steps the lobby is reached where the pay-box and bars are placed and various outlying departments connected with the hall. Branch lobbies lead into the body of the house and staircases to the extensive galleries. In the Whitebait a 6d ticket admits to the body of the hall and which [*sic*] includes a drink. The price of admission to the gallery and boxes is 1s and which also includes refreshments. […]

On gaining access, aspects of the auditorium are surprising:

> The hall of the Whitebait occupies nearly the whole of the building, and is fitted with every accessory for comfort. Seats, sofas and tables are ranged round the hall and under the galleries, so that visitors obtain a clear view of the stage. In the body of the hall the sofas are ranged in the direction of the length of the building, which occasions the onlookers to turn themselves, not always comfortably, to obtain a full view .. The stage is formed in a recess at the eastern end of the hall, is decorated with much tasteful ornament, and is covered above by a half dome of ornate device. The galleries surround three sides of the hall. Scarlet curtains hang in front of the gallery boxes, giving an air of warmth and comfort to the house, and serve to screen the occupants, who are generally represented by the faster members of the 'upper ten'.[65]

So who went to this place? The clientele represented 'the most varied elements'. As well as 'elderly gentlemen with a fondness for music and mirth', it seems mostly young men:

> Fast youths in their 'teens' and 'twenties' occupy places in the body of the hall and give noisy applause to the serio comiques whose voices sound siren-like to the beardless revellers. Smoking cheroots, sipping 'bitter', sporting rings and wearing wide-awakes jauntily, 'young Glasgow' can be studied at leisure at the Whitebait.'

The third group regularly present were sailors,'"Jolly tars", whose love of a song and a laugh is pleasantly satiated in this hall', the 'maritime element' being 'an agreeable variation upon the staid solemnity of elderly critics and the gushing enthusiasm of the younger portion of the audience'.[66]

With its saloon-style free arrangement of sofas and tables, the Whitebait, which had opened in 1853, sounds more like a pub, or decadent imitation of a gentlemen's club, than the modern idea of a music hall, no doubt due to its origins in the older supper club-style of concert room. Moreover its ambiance is decidedly male, either older roués, young mashers or service-men. In fact the Whitebait was an early 'pub' music hall, a hybrid devel-opment which offered an enlarged capacity while retaining much of the informality of a singing saloon.

In contrast to this smoky, male ambience, the report in the *Sentinel* of 25 September 1869 describes the reopening of the Britannia after exten-sive refurbishment that marked the launch of Rossborough's management:

> Under Mr Rossborough's proprietorship the hall has been thoroughly ren-ovated, and may now challenge rivalry with any music hall in the United Kingdom. The façade of the building is about the most striking in the city, and for architectural beauty certainly has nothing to rival it. Forming the most imposing building in the Trongate, the Britannia unavoidably draws the attention of strangers. The latest adornments of the hall include a pair of elegant lamps, by J. & R. Finnegan of Argyle Street, the design and work-manship of which attracts unusual notice. The doorway to the Britannia and general entrance has been completely remodelled. Three elegant archways of a Moorish design give entrance to a square hall, floored with mosaic and panelled and painted with very great taste indeed. The painting and general decoration of the lobby, and of the whole building, have been done by Mr John McKay of Gallowgate and everywhere display great artistic taste, com-bined with the best workmanship. Two folding doors lead from the hall to the staircases, which convey the public to all the portions of the house. This new arrangement is simple and commodious, and gives opportunities for easy entrance and sudden exit. The staircase accommodation has, moreover, been so arranged that additional space has been obtained for the accommo-dation of the public, and indeed the alterations made give an entirely new character to the establishment. The roof of the hall has been, along with other parts, redecorated, and presents quite an elegant appearance. Boldly panelled and painted in accordance with the mouldings that cross it, the roof of the Britannia, lighted up by many chandeliers, has really a splendid affect. The front of the galleries, the proscenium, the wings of the stage, and all the more prominent points are painted with a due regard to the general affect,

and the whole presents a *coup d'oeil* which must astonish those who are unacquainted with the music halls of Glasgow. The front gallery has been comfortably fitted up with cushioned seats and affords ample accommodation for the better class of visitors who may desire to take their wives and children. And to complete the hall for the comfort of all who may desire to visit it, a series of private boxes have been placed at the back of the middle gallery, the decoration and adornment of which give a finish to that portion of the house.

The dressing rooms, backstage arrangements and scenic decor were all approved of, as were the high musical standards of the performance:

Indeed the entertainments at the Britannia confessed to be first rate, and reflect credit on the management and the spirit of the proprietor. Mr Rossborough, during a long engagement as manager to Mr Brand, was fortunate in securing for himself the esteem of a large circle of friends, whose support, in his new undertaking as proprietor, has been tendered with heartiness. Indeed, few public men can lay claim to the place Mr Rossborough holds in the estimation of the public, and under his proprietorship the Britannia is fated to continue its wonderfully popular career.[67]

Ostensibly the *Sentinel*'s account of the Britannia is not markedly different in tone from that of the Whitebait. Both are highly, even flatteringly, appreciative of the venue's ambiance and amenities. In neither case is there any question of censoriousness. But whilst the Whitebait's appreciation is couched in the language of conviviality and material comfort, aspects of the Britannia description suggest a more careful agenda on the management's part. In the first place, the emphasis on the extensive workmanship of the outfitting of the building, very similar to descriptions of new legitimate theatres, was a particular feature, and one that had several possible impacts. The first was to convey the substance, both financial and institutional, of the venture, in which the intent of the management was seen to be translated into craftmanship and expenditure. However, as part of this, and beyond the enumeration of the specialist companies and craftsmen involved, the physical description of the architecture and fittings, with its stress on elegance, fine workmanship and painting, also suggest a higher level of aesthetic input, one that transcends straightforward comfort. While the Whitebait as described sounds rather like a well upholstered brothel, in the Britannia's case a higher aesthetic attainment is surely the aim.

An important part of this aesthetic involves the Moorish theme of the décor, which seems strikingly similar to that of another Glasgow music

hall, the Royal Alhambra in Jamaica Street, which had opened two years earlier in 1867, when the *Sentinel* had suggested that 'associated with all that is magical in song and story, the Arabian architecture is better suited than any other for a concert hall'.[68] Based on the Alhambra in Granada, 'that marvel of a civilisation which rose and vanished in Western Europe like an enchantment', the key principles of the design, its combination of light, elegance and spaciousness, were extended to include such practical considerations as the provision of spacious exits and throughways in and out of the hall. This harmonious marrying of a civilising and fashionable aesthetic with practical function was an important part of the *Sentinel*'s approval.

As a rival manager, Rossborough was highly likely to have been familiar with the Royal Alhambra's design. While his choice of a similar scheme for the Britannia may have been coincidental, the enthusiastic reception it had received from the *Sentinel*, a newspaper reflective of reform-minded progressive opinion in the city, would hardly have been lost on him.

As an influential radical weekly, the *Sentinel* had long promoted rational recreation across a broad range of applications.[69] Moreover, it had a recent record of defending theatre as a source of morally improving recreation. When in 1867 the Rev. Gabriel Kerr, minister of Cowcaddens, attacked the new Prince of Wales Theatre, the *Sentinel* had come to its defence: lampooning Kerr as the 'Angel Gabriel', after an anti-Catholic demagogue of the 1850s, it suggested that 'far from demoralizing the audiences who crowd into his house, Mr Davis [the theatre manager] […] has alone withdrawn more customers from the public-house, and the debasing influence connected with weary idleness and dissipation, than Mr Kerr is likely to do during a lengthened period of his ministry'.[70] While music hall was on trickier moral ground (the newspaper's defence of the Prince of Wales had loftily cited Schiller and Shakespeare), the approving verdict on the Royal Alhambra nevertheless concluded that:

> To lure reckless seamen away from the dissipation of the Broomielaw taverns nothing better could be devised, and by the crowd of sailors already visible among the audience it is evident that this benificent good is being achieved. Foolish fanatics have raised foolish cries against the spread of places intended for cheap and harmless amusement when the very reverse ought to be their policy. To these and the dull fraternity who hate to see poor men happy the success of the Alhambra may not be an agreeable expectation; but to the wise, the tolerant, the religious, and kindly-hearted the reverse must be the case.

At the heart of the *Sentinel*'s belief lay the pragmatic conviction that leisure and recreation were a human necessity, which had to be provided for one way or another, and should therefore be used as a tool for moral and social improvement. To this end the reviews of venues seem remarkably free from the religious dogmatism associated with those it termed 'the dull fraternity who hate to see poor men happy', but concentrated on accentuating the positive aspects of what they encountered.

A second feature of the Britannia refurbishment that met with particular approval was the façade, which the *Sentinel* thought 'about the most striking in the city'. With its elegant, classically decorated, four-storey elevation, the fascia resembled those of the façade theatres described by Marvin Carlson, which 'never presented any information about the spaces inside or their use', but 'served an essentially illustrative function, attempting to present a particular public image for the attached theatre'. By further enhancing it with elegant lamps, and remodelling the entrance with Moorish arches, Rossborough was using the façade to project the hall's status as a respectable entertainment, in a statement that 'clearly went beyond identifying [the] building as a theatre' but 'was rather to reinforce a certain desired image'.[71]

In so doing, Rossborough was invoking the spatial criteria of reformers to further emphasise the gulf that now existed between the new Britannia, and old, disreputable establishments of its rivals. The older generation of singing saloons were located in narrow wynds, enclosed spaces that resonated strongly with poverty and disease. The Whitebait itself, an innocuous premises accessed through several anonymous entrances, was situated in the seedy St Enoch's Wynd, which, 'at night when all the business places were closed, being badly lit up', was 'a very dangerous locality', in which brawls regularly broke out between drunken sailors and soldiers.[72] The Britannia, in contrast, occupied a prime position on a major thoroughfare. Its fashionable Italianate frontage, which included sculpted figures of 'putti', or cherubim, chimed with the democratic principles of architects such as Charles Wilson, who 'argued that "modern architecture" must take its lessons from the Italians' in their incorporation of art and sculpture, and that such was its transforming potential that 'the architect must precede the missionary in reaching into the lives and dwellings of the poor'.[73] Rossborough's utilisation of these spatial and aesthetic associations, very much playing the reformers at their own game, was again a potent means of further distancing the Britannia from its rivals, and emphasising that it formed part of a new 'respectable' urban entertainment culture, one which belonged to the splendid façade of Trongate, rather than the backlands it concealed.

If the Britannia's design therefore provided a civilising effect, one designed to win the *Sentinel*'s approval, Rossborough also made practical changes to the hall's layout, to include a statement of social intent in its new seating arrangements: these now included a front gallery 'comfortably fitted up with cushioned seats which affords ample accommodation for the better class of visitors who may desire to take their wives and children', while 'to complete the hall for the comfort of all who may desire to visit it, a series of private boxes have been placed at the back of the middle gallery'.[74] Exactly who constituted the elusive 'better class' of visitors, or whether 'respectable' men of any social class were likely to bring their womenfolk to music hall, is unclear. But the advertisement of areas designated for women and children, in the context of putative 'family' attendance, and in marked contrast to the very male ambience of pub halls like the Whitebait, represented a watershed with regard to the aims and ambition of music hall in Glasgow.

If the décor, interior and exterior, indicated improving, civilising aspirations, Rossborough also introduced practical measures that amounted to moral supervision of his audience, in the form of improved codes of dress and behaviour. In October 1869, only a month after the reopening, the *Sentinel* reported that:

> A pleasant improvement is visible among the working men who crowd the pit of the Britannia. Under recent regulations clean clothes and a tidy appearance are insisted upon with very considerable advantage to the workmen, who are coerced into attending to cleanliness. Our concert halls re educational institutes as well as places of amusement, and Mr Rossborough has evidently some very grave convictions upon his duty towards the public.[75]

In a society which increasingly judged by appearances, these improvements spoke directly to middle-class values that put great emphasis on respectability being positively enacted and embodied through the adoption of appropriate dress.[76]

Not only was dress improving under the new regime: there was also evidence that the pleasing aesthetic of the new décor, together with the rules Rossborough had put in place, were indeed acting on audiences to produce a more refined and civilized ambience:

> The Britannia, under the new management, is reaping the full benefit of the extensive alterations made by Mr Rossborough. The elegant entrance necessarily draws many passing wayfarers towards the hall, and the existing

arrangements have provided for the class of more respectable visitors anxious to hear good music at moderate cost. The elegant and brilliant appearance of the hall has its own effect upon the comfort of the visitors and the regulations which have been laid down by Mr Rossborough regarding the cleanliness and the dress of his visitors has already renovated the appearance of the pit. Indeed Mr Rossborough is coupling education of a musical taste with other practical lessons of a marked import.[77]

As the flattering references to his stewardship suggest, these changes also brought a personal benefit to Rossborough. By improving the social profile of his working audiences he was also enhancing his own reputation as a businessman dealing in responsibly administered entertainment—a status that set him apart from the gaudy music hall world he inhabited professionally. This dual aspect—of an entertainment entrepreneur striving for social currency in business circles—is evident in a newly discovered carte de visite of Rossborough and his wife that dates from 1869–70, around the time of the Britannia's relaunch (Fig. 2.2). Made possible by the new wet collodium process, the introduction of smaller carte de visite prints had allowed for production of affordable multiple copies of images which could be circulated to family and friends, as well as to professional contacts, and had sparked a vogue for popular photography. Theatrical CDVs of stage stars were an important part of this expanding market, and Rossborough's image is signed and dedicated on the reverse to the French acrobat George Leglere. But while music hall performers used the sale of such portraits to promote their celebrity, often through eroticised images that emphasised the performers' meta-theatricality and exceptionalism, Rossborough's aspirations seem to have been the opposite—to project a fashionable but decidedly lower-key domestic sobriety befitting a middle-class man of business. But while the photograph shows Rossborough seated at a table, his wife at his side with her hand on his shoulder, in the formal seated/standing configuration that was conventional for married couples, in other respects the photograph is unusually animated by the standard of such portraits.[78] The couple seem very stylish, their dress and hairstyles both reflecting the fashions of the day: Rossborough has a side-parting and whiskers, and is wearing a double-breasted frock coat, and a polka-dotted waistcoat and cravat, with a decorative watch chain and day trousers with a fashionable striped pattern. His wife wears a day dress and has her hair in a chignon, both typical of the late 1860s. In a composition that is both domestic and slightly enigmatic, Rossborough faces out towards the camera, as if interrupted in thought, while his wife, a book in

Fig. 2.2   Carte de Visite, Mrs and Mrs H.T. Rossborough, c.1869/70. Alexander Brothers, Glasgow. Author's Collection

her left hand, focuses on her husband's work, looking over his shoulder at the papers he holds, unusually animated for a spouse in such compositions.

The only feature that hints at irregularity is that the table is strewn with documents, while various papers—including a folded poster or playbill, along with letters and envelopes—are scattered on the floor at his feet, in a strangely disordered and random effect. Did this intimate a man of business used to dealing dealing with the press, whose work involved contracts and correspondence? Notwithstanding the formality of the composition, was this hint of chaos a way of implying the dynamism and creativity of a theatrical impresario?

Rossborough's main motive for the refurbishment was no doubt to upgrade the Britannia in order to attract a better class of audience. However his decision to embrace the language and values of moral improvement was, like Brand's acceptance of temperance, a business decision, taken as a form of insurance to safeguard his investment in the Britannia. The prospect of such strategic thinking becomes understandable in the context of the new business that music hall had rapidly become. Venues like the Britannia represented large capital investments, incurred in the costs of outfitting and refurbishment, which required the involvement of entrepreneurial managers in speculations which often over-extended their capital. Available statistics illustrate the substantial sums involved, and the extent to which the prospect of large profits encouraged often reckless speculation on the part of managers. In London the average capitalisation of music halls in 1866 was close to £10,000. Tracy Davis, in analysing thirty-six theatre insolvencies among Scottish managers between 1830 and 1911, found that their proven liabilities averaged £4318; of nine insolvents who declared the amount of capital they had invested in their businesses, the average was only £383, which Davis comments was 'a surprisingly low sum considering that the average paid-up capital for Scottish limited liability joint stock theatre companies in this same period is £17,903'.[79] While managers like Rossborough, Brand and James Baylis were publicans, with experience of running halls or singing saloons, others were opportunistic businessmen or investors attracted by the prospect of a rapid return from the booming entertainment market. Henry Levy of the Shakespeare saloon was formerly a cigar-manufacturer, Wilkinson of the Royal Alhambra was a philosophical instrument maker, and William Kean, Rossborough's successor at the Britannia, a carver and gilder. All three went bankrupt.

In this climate Rossborough's decision to publicly embrace the language and values of moral improvement, as far as they were compatible

with commercial entertainments, represented a form of insurance: while it might have brought little or no short-term gain, the cultivation of influential commentators and sections of progressive middle-class opinion was an important safeguard for future operations.

It also proved prescient. In February 1875 an article in the *North British Daily Mail* complaining about lewd performances by women dancers at a Glasgow music hall, subsequently revealed to be the Whitebait, provoked a heated correspondence, an angry public meeting, and a petition from a group of businessmen, largely representative of evangelical interests, to the Lord Provost and Magistrates denouncing 'the flagrant and serious evils which are being engendered by the singing saloons of this city'. Although the Magistrates stood firm against demands for reform of licensing practise, the Whitebait subsequently had its application to renew its licence turned down.[80] Dagmar Kift, in her examination of the incident, has suggested that the protesters' initial concern lay not with music hall as such, but with the leisure habits of their young male employees, particularly office clerks, whose activities then led them to the halls. There, Kift suggests, the concerned employers would have found 'not only a "cultural deviation" on the part of [their] employees but also the existence of an alternative culture which was not only highly attractive to the lower classes but also diametrically opposed to the culture of the middle classes'. Kift also suggests that, given that temperance organisations were already involved in promoting entertainments to further their message, from the perspective of the music hall managers in 1875:

> The major point of contention was now not alcohol but the programme. The opponents were now not teetotallers but moral reformers. And it was the constellation of these two new factors which was to define the nature of the dispute for the next twenty years.[81]

This notion of two cultures, which Ian Spring terms the 'two cities in one' trope of Victorian fiction, may have taken on concrete form by the 1890s, when S.G. Checkland suggests that 'increasing geographical segregation on a class basis', resulted in the emergence of 'two Glasgows'.[82]

Rossborough's recognition of the value of cultivating middle-class approval, albeit through enlightened opinion already disposed to rational recreation, seems unusually farsighted, especially as historians such as Chris Waters have suggested that entrepreneurial managers only developed this ability to inhabit and replicate the language of moral recreation, turning it to their own advantage, towards the 1890s.[83] Although Rossborough's

skilful adoption of its precepts in the 1860s challenges this assumption, his example also serves to emphasise the extent to which managers were responsive to their local conditions. In the case of Glasgow, unlike in London, the religiously-driven character of the debate regarding improvement advanced in municipal politics, meant that the area of contention shifted to the moral conduct of entertainment venues. One of the particular features of Glasgow's civic gospel was that it was morally interventionist and proactive, to a much greater extent than the municipal moral governance practiced in, for example, Birmingham, which was nevertheless greatly influenced by Glasgow. This may have partly resulted from historic practices, the historian Hamish Fraser observing that 'control was always a major element in Scottish municipal activity, reflecting a deeply-entrenched tradition of burgh and church regulation'.[84] But the upshot was an authoritarian tendency that meant that, as Checkland writes, 'Glasgow magistrates did not hesitate to use their powers to censor art exhibitions and otherwise to preside over morality.'[85] In this context Rossborough's positioning of his business within the compass of improving interests seems to have been an astute response calculated to ensure its trouble-free operation.

At the sharp end, in strictly commercial terms, Rossborough's strategy clearly also translated into financial success. With or without alcohol, by the 1870s music hall could be a highly profitable business. In 1872 a correspondent of *The Bailie* described the crowd assembled outside the Britannia, when 'the sudden withdrawal of the bolts' was followed by 'the flying open of the doors, and the rush of men, women and boys to get inside and secure their places'. The writer adjudged the lucky Rossborough to be sitting on a fortune, ruefully observing:

> I should like to light upon such another mine as the Britannia, with all rights reserved to myself. The people *will* come—they *will* buckle fortune upon the back of the proprietor, without a thought as to whether they are not overdoing it. I understand that the duties at the receipt of custom are positively becoming too much for him, that he 'gins to be aweary' of the perpetual shovelling in of coins. His patrons will not have it so, however. The cry is still they come: and, to avoid being overwhelmed, he must e'en face them in the breach yet a little longer.[86]

By the mid-1880s, Rossborough had achieved the status that was accorded to commercial longevity. The Britannia, once a speculative venture after the manner of most ephemeral high-risk entertainments, was now an established business, advertised as 'Pre-eminently the most Popular Place of

Amusement in Glasgow'. As if in recognition of this, Rossborough sought to develop his enterprise from the family basis that Tracy Davis has identified as providing such a flexible model of entrepreneurial activity, to that of a partnership. However, although the admission of a partner, Robert McKean, formerly manager of the Folly Music hall, was announced in early 1885, the change being reported in terms of 'the firm being now Messrs. H.T. Rossborough and Mr R. McKean', McKean's sudden death only months later saw the management revert to its previous basis.[87] As a popular and respected figure, McKean's funeral was attended by the cream of the Glasgow music-hall community, in a display that emphasised its pretensions to consideration as a professional body. Prominent among the many wreathes was 'a handsome and costly one … subscribed for by the artistes and employees engaged at the Britannia'.[88]

Music hall had come on. As the social profile of its promoters inevitably influenced perceptions of music hall's moral status, its proprietors had assumed the trappings of the professional and managerial classes. If levels of social acceptance in Victorian society were elaborately nuanced and gradated, the claims of financial success to confer approval of some sort, albeit grudging, and the embodiment of conscious 'respectability' through its various material manifestations—houses, servants, charitable giving and evidence of disposable income—could not be gainsaid for long. Rossborough himself, who died in 1887, seems the sketchy embodiment of this aspirational arriviste tendency. Although never accorded any public profile or distinction, the biographical facts that we have imply a considerable material success. He lived in Mount Vernon and died at Luss on Loch Lomond at the age of forty-nine, reportedly having amassed 'a handsome fortune from his careful management' of the Britannia, and bequeathing a considerable sum to several local charities.[89]

Rossborough's twenty-year tenure represented the highpoint of the Britannia's success, and none of his successor managers were to enjoy such a sustained period of profitable operation. One explanation for this was the increase in competition from rival halls and theatres: indeed it is arguable that a proof of the existence by the 1890s of a wider, more stratified and sophisticated entertainment market in Glasgow was the Britannia's relative decline within it, the result of being superseded by a new generation of more modern and better located variety theatres. The Britannia, a venue that had been state-of-the-art in 1869, was by the late 1880s starting to look and feel old. Moreover it was located in the unfashionable eastern end of the city centre, the focal point of which had shifted west-

wards towards Sauchiehall Street and Hope Street, where new palaces of varieties were to be built in the 1890s.

Rossborough's management had in any case been under increasing pressure from the mid-1880s, in ways which suggest that his former progressive policies had either been set aside or become ineffectual. Part of the sense of this comes from the Glasgow-published music hall journal *The Professional*, which in the spring of 1886 carried a series of disparaging references to Rossborough's Britannia, accusing his management of sharp practice and discourtesy towards performers, and of short-changing audiences by booking acts late. Damagingly, another item recounted how a regular visitor to the hall had witnessed 'a scene of rowdyism' involving bouncers acting thuggishly in using excessive force in ejecting badly behaved patrons. Warning that this was all too typical, the writer claimed 'If some of the cases were properly looked after, many a time the "chuckers-out" of the establishment would be into trouble for serious assaults committed on members of the audience while they were being ejected'.[90] Most damaging for Rossborough was a report titled 'Ten Minutes of a Rough House', which claimed that the previous Monday had featured 'some lively scenes … seldom seen in a music hall' when an advertised champion clog-dancer whose engagement had been heavily advertised failed to appear due to ill health. When the furious crowd refused to accept the explanation that the dancer was too ill to appear '(Cries of "Why did you not tell us that when you took our money?")', the appearance of 'a gentleman supposed to be Rossborough' at one end of the hall 'was the signal for a terrific storm of hissing, yelling and howling, the most of the audience rising to their feet'. After further ugly scenes the dancer, John Williams, was sent for and eventually appeared on stage, evidently very unwell, and despite some barracking ('A Voice—"Awa' an' throw yoursel' in Clyde"') was finally able to convince the audience of his indisposition with a promise to appear the next night.[91]

Whatever the basis of his dispute with *The Professional*, in music hall the threat of disorder was anyway never far beneath the surface, and usually provoked a self-reliant approach to public order. Even at the Scotia, considered Glasgow's model hall, they 'had rough nights in plenty'. The formidable matriarch Mrs Baylis 'hated policemen, and wouldn't allow them in the theatre', but employed a team of fifteen uniformed 'chuckers-out', 'nearly all Irishmen, bricklayers or labourers, great hefty fellows', who would quickly subdue and eject trouble makers.[92]

If Rossborough's long tenure of the Britannia seemed to exemplify the success of family ownership as a model, his sudden death demonstrated

its fragility, and the extent to which the authority of such businesses was vested in the founding individual. Following his death, the Britannia went dark, and although the proprietorship then passed to his widow, Lizzie, a gap of twenty months ensued before it eventually reopened. This probably reflected financial or legal complications surrounding the estate, Rossborough having died after a short illness. The practice of a widow taking over her husband's theatrical lease was itself relatively common in Glasgow.[93] When the hall reopened in August 1889, after undergoing a partial refit, it was as an 'old established place of entertainment', in which Rossborough's refined scheme had been given a new emphasis. On the opening night:

> the place [was] literally packed from floor to ceiling, while large numbers had to be turned away disappointed. When lighted up the hall had a brilliant appearance, being newly painted and decorated, and has been in some parts reconstructed for the comfort of the public. The side wings and scenery have been brushed up, and a new scene takes the place of an old historical one, namely, a street scene representing the Trongate—from the Britannia east to the Cross. It is painted by Mr Fred Holden, a very promising artist, and gives a graphic view of the various shops and places along the route.[94]

While the act drop, 'a nice bit of art' by the celebrated scenic artist William Glover, depicted 'The Silver Strand at Loch Katrine', the depiction in the scenery of local scenes of Trongate and its environs marked a shift away from the auditorium's previous transcendent exoticism. Did this represent a new reflexive urbanism, the extent to which 'the city on stage had become normalised as the main site of everyday living'?[95] Or an affirmation of the sense of local identification and familiarity that lay at the heart of the Britannia's current appeal? In this latter respect, the recasting of the hall as the 'old "Brit"' recurs in the report's conclusion, which observes:

> With the experienced Mrs Rossborough as lessee, and under the able management of Mr Alex M'Gown, assisted by Mr J. Sullivan and Tom Farrell, the Britannia will no doubt become what it once was—the favourite resort of the public.[96]

The Britannia is portrayed as a feature of community life, almost an amenity. While the subtext is that it has lost ground to its rivals, which it is now seeking to recover, the 'Old Brit' tag also carries the reassurance that,

under Mrs Rossborough and Alex McGown, her son by her first marriage to the well-known singer Paddy McGown, the Britannia of 1889 was going to continue to operate in the same popular spirit as it had done previously. Was this emphasis a change of direction, an example of the hall repositioning itself in the market to exploit what was now its main appeal—its reflexive status as familiar, trusted and local?

In March 1890 the popular songwriter James Curran, a well-known writer of parodies, made his debut as a performer, in what sound like chaotic scenes.

> The house was crammed, and his reception was something terrific; his burlesque songs and parodies fairly caught on, and he was recalled over and over again. When Jamie had 'done' the large number of seven songs he thought to get away, but it was no good, the audience 'hauled him back again.' So after giving a comic parody on 'Little Annie Rooney,' he was allowed to retire. The popular manager, Mr M'Gown, heartily congratulated him on his success, and promptly engaged him for another six nights, before the end of which the audience were not content with even ten songs.[97]

This sort of riotously extemporised, over-running performance, with the new star's heady success being rewarded by instant re-engagement, were features that were shortly to disappear in the changes to working practices introduced by the syndicated variety managements of the 1890s. But did this represent the hall's performing legacy? Rossborough's reputation as an educator of the working classes had been gained in the late 1860s; by the 1880s, this aspect of his management may have been long-superseded, if indeed it was ever as apparent to audiences as it had been to the *Sentinel*'s moral consciousness.

Certainly by the 1890s, the 'old' Britannia offered a robustly physical city-centre music hall ambience, where Monday nights were 'a bit lively', and when 'no-one took notice of waiters and chuckers-out perambulating about the hall with black eyes and red noses'.[98] The socialist leader Harry McShane's father and grandfather both worked as 'ticket-collectors and chuckers-out' at the Britannia and the Tivoli in Anderston in the period. (In his autobiography McShane recounts how one night his grandfather, who 'had a reputation for toughness … to get at someone who was making a row in the gallery, walked right round the *edge* of the gallery. When he reached the man he grabbed him out of his seat by his face and put him out.')[99]

'The Only Working-Class Hall in Glasgow'

Rossborough's death in 1887 offers an opportunity to examine changes to both music hall management since the mid-century, and to the moral complexion of municipal politics in which it operated. The period was one in which music hall was to undergo profound change. The introduction in the early 1890s of variety, by which syndicates of investors financed the building of expensive new theatres, was to lead to major changes in presentation. The need to secure the investment involved led to increases in productivity through the introduction of twice-nightly performances, the strict timing of bills, discouragement of encores, and curbing of spontaneity.

While historians of popular culture broadly concur that music hall developed into what Peter Bailey terms a 'prototype modern entertainment industry'—the changes in managerial structures and ownership by which it came about have proved harder to pin down. Andrew Crowhurst has used Alfred Chandler's three-stage model, by which managements were categorised into personal, entrepreneurial and managerial modes of operation, while Tracy Davis has examined the important distinctions between the roles of lessee and manager, manager and impresario, and the overarching role of entrepreneur.[100] While there is agreement that early music hall proprietors relied extensively on informal ties of professional 'friendship' and networks of mutual support, Crowhurst has disputed Bailey's contention that the move to variety was effected at a pivotal point in the late 1880s, in a period that saw managers switch from 'caterer' to 'director', in a phase of dynamic transformation. He argues instead that the transition was much slower, and that the syndicates were ultimately much more like 'entrepreneurial' managements—with creative impresarios remaining in leading roles—than the bureaucratic 'managerial' system of salaried functionaries that Bailey evokes.[101]

Although the Britannia's proprietors were 'personal' managements by Chandler's terms, the changes that can be observed to their working practices, which were largely brought about by their individual fortunes, illustrate the over-riding importance of localised factors. The first was that, while the influence of moral improvement had reached its high water mark by the 1890s, after which it began to recede, as support for temperance gradually declined, individual proprietors were increasingly burdened by the costs of implementing expensive safety legislation.

William Kean, who succeeded Mrs Rossborough in 1892, had made his money from a chemicals business and took the lease for five years at a

rent of £550 per annum. Kean refurbished the hall before reopening but in February 1894 was forced to close it to undertake what were candidly described in advertisements as 'extensive structural alterations ordered by the Magistrates under the Further Powers (Police) Act'. The *Quiz* summarised the work as 'The roof … being heightened, and stone stairs introduced, together with other improvements which will make the Britannia a handsome and comfortable music hall'.[102] Kean used the opportunity to upgrade, and on reopening in August stated that 'during the recess the entire building has been painted and redecorated, upholstered and a complete installation of the electric light throughout the entire building'.[103] However the financial pressures of both the work and the closure took their toll. After investing £1200 in fixtures, Kean was eventually driven to bankruptcy, ascribing his problems to intense competition from rival managers. In his statement he asserted that, at the time he took out the lease 'I was worth roughly about £3500 and I thought that was enough with which to venture on the music hall business.' He went on to state that 'The Britannia music hall was never profitable'. When asked 'How do you account for your not managing to make it pay?' Kean explained:

> I acquired the lease in May but didn't open until after decorating on 1st of August. During that time the People's Palace and Scotia, which were closed when I entered upon the lease, opened and Messrs Thornton and Kirk acquired the Scotia in conjunction with the Gaiety and they floated a limited liability company. Between these two I could not get artistes, and here I could not get people inside.[104]

Kean's experience reflected a key outcome of improvement, the increasing move towards municipal regulation of public entertainment spaces, in this case in legislation resulting from a fatal panic at the Star Music Hall in nearby Watson Street in 1884. Single proprietors with ageing premises increasingly struggled under the financial burden of meeting new safety requirements, costs which syndicated variety managements, with newer venues, were better able to absorb. This combination of the inability to compete with better capitalised variety theatres, which monopolised the market for star performers, and the cost of maintaining increasingly aged and unfashionable buildings, meant that none of Rossborough's successors at the Britannia were able to recapture his level of financial success for any sustained period.

Kean was a businessman investor who proved out of his depth in music hall management and was remembered unforgivingly for 'spoiling the hall

through starring fighting men and serio comics'. However his successor, Arthur Hubner, was an example of the new transitional style of manager Crowhust may have had in mind, a creative showman and impresario who was music hall to his fingertips, but who nevertheless viewed his venues—including the Britannia—as flexible assets in a new evolving market dominated by syndicated variety.

Although Hubner was an ambitious manager whose sights were set on competing in the high-end variety market, he realised that by the late 1890s the Britannia's only viability now lay as a working-class venue. A manager who was focused on new technologies and the development of variety as a putative middle-class entertainment bowed to local market conditions. By playing on the Britannia's strengths as the 'old' working-class music hall and on community associations with a familiar and much-loved venue, he appealed to residual sentiments of community-based conviviality and fellow feeling that were increasingly distant from the more cosmopolitan profile that smarter city centre variety sought to cultivate.

This formal designation of the 'Old Brit' as a working-class hall—a strategic marketing decision that rivalled Brand's pragmatic acceptance of temperance operation and Rossborough's use of improvement—established what was increasingly to become the Britannia's unique sales point right up to Pickard's advertisement of the hall as 'Ye Olde Panopticon' in the 1920s.

An outline of Hubner's own entrepreneurial journey is important to appreciate the tides of modernity and new market climate against which the Britannia was struggling in the late 1890s. A South African, Hubner was a showman, stage illusionist and pioneering early film exhibitor who combined his predilection for new technologies with a readiness to experiment with presentational and marketing innovations. Remembered for introducing 'his conjuring show, the vanishing lady cabinet trick' and 'the bullet-proof jacket', most importantly he was at the forefront of early cinema exhibition in Glasgow. After touring with a shooting act, in May 1896 Hubner gave the first theatrical film screenings in Glasgow at the Skating Palace on Sauchiehall Street, using an R.W. Paul projector. An eyewitness account of this display of 'living pictures' gives a sense of their dramatic impact:

> The screen was small and was sprayed with water before the performance began, and then, wonder of wonders, the Prince of Wales appeared reviewing a guard of honour at Ballater station, and his horse, Persimmon, galloped on the racecourse at Epsom and won the Derby. A very streaky flickering exhibition but amazing.[105]

The following year, having acquired a Lumière Brothers machine and films during a visit to Paris, Hubner showed such early 'actualities' as 'The Departure of the Columba from Rothesay Pier' and film of the Gordon Highlanders marching out of Maryhill Barracks.[106] After giving the first film shows at the Britannia on 25 August 1896, he assumed the management of the hall the following February. Thereafter Hubner's Cinematograph became a permanent feature of Britannia bills, and within months other Glasgow halls were emulating him by acquiring their own Bioscopes.

As an ambitious entrepreneur, Hubner viewed the Britannia as a springboard for other ventures rather than an end in itself. In November 1897 he opened a new music hall, the New Eastern Alhambra in Tobago Street, Calton, aiming 'to provide Amusement for the people, at people's prices'. Following the model of smaller halls in Liverpool, it offered twice-nightly performances but seems to have been shortlived.[107] The following year Hubner also took over the management of the Empire Music Hall in Paisley, the lessee of which was J.H. Saville, the owner of Paisley Theatre. One of the benefits of the arrangement was the opportunity to economise on costs by sharing performers, and advertisements from 1898 show acts such as 'The Boxing Kangaroo' appearing at both halls.'[108]

If Hubner then was an adept operator used to negotiating a range of different markets and practices in order to make venues profitable, his decision to aim for the working-class audience by introducing people's prices at the Britannia was a strategy that has to be seen in the context of the dramatic changes that had taken place in the local music hall market.

Essentially he was bowing to the inevitable. By the late 1890s the introduction of variety, the new genre intended to rebrand music hall for a more respectable family audience, had transformed the hierarchy of music hall in Glasgow. Moss and Thornton's new Empire Palace, opened in 1897 and accommodating 3000 in electrically-lit opulence, was the prototype for a number of other modern palaces of varieties that were to open in Glasgow over the next fifteen or so years, which included the Pavilion (1904), Coliseum (1905), Palace (1909) and Alhambra (1911). This enormous investment in infrastructure—in bricks and mortar—was secured by a parallel investment in talent which saw leading syndicates effectively sign the top national stars and acts to exclusive contracts, which barred them from appearing at any other hall within a specified radius of miles. By all previous standards the scale of the new theatres and the entertainment market they opened up was quite extraordinary. Some of the new flagship palaces of varieties were as far removed from older halls in size and scale as the

Britannia hall had been from the howffs of the Saltmarket: Moss Empires' giant Coliseum in the south-side, built to a Flemish design, had an octagonal tower and a minaret topped by a revolving cylinder lantern which spelt out 'Coliseum' in electric lamps. With twice-nightly performances, its 4000 seats added another 48,000 to the weekly capacity of a city which already had seven theatres and ten music halls.[109]

Hubner, faced with an unfashionable venue, and an ever-widening gap between the quality of entertainment he could offer at the Britannia, and that provided by these larger, more modern and better situated and capitalised competitors, made a virtue of necessity. A press profile from 1898 saluting his efforts at the Britannia sees him hailed as the champion of affordable entertainment for working people:

> When Messrs. Moss and Thornton threw over the Glasgow working class by closing the Scotia and opening the Empire with high West-End prices of admission, such as no working man could afford to pay, Mr. Hubner stepped into the breach, and taking the Britannia Theatre in hand—always a favourite with the working class—took the title at the flood and led on to fortune. It was a good thing for the working class, and a good thing for him; and to-day the Britannia stands as the only working class music hall in Glasgow—a city with nearly one million of a population, while some three or four years ago there were no less than four.[110]

This interpretation, surely Hubner's chosen narrative, represents what might be termed the 'rational recreation' defence, with Hubner contriving to claim moral credit for concentrating on what was anyway his core audience. In fact, there is little evidence that the working classes were being priced out of the city's music hall market, or that they failed to support the Empire, which, while aiming to extend the upper social range of its audience, continued to attract large working audiences, which remained crucial to its success.

The reality was rather that the Britannia was now old-fashioned, and situated in an unfashionable part of the town centre, well away from the main concentration of newer palaces of varieties, centred on Sauchiehall Street and Hope Street. By proclaiming his role as provider for working-class audiences, anyway his de facto constituency, Hubner could also make a feature of his 'people's prices' to stress the integrity of his motives. In so doing he was, like Rossborough, tapping into the language of improvement, joining the ranks of entrepreneurial managers who 'by the 1890s … were particularly adept at describing their products within a discursive framework pioneered by the advocates of rational reform'.[111]

However, there were important differences between Hubner's tactics and Rossborough's of a generation earlier. In 1869 Rossborough had asserted the improving credentials of his management, and its beneficial effect on his working audience largely for the benefit of progressive middle-class opinion. In contrast, Hubner's conversion to 'people's prices' in 1898 may have had a more immediate tactical objective, that of attracting that section of the 'respectable' working-class audience which had been drawn to the popular concert series put on by the various temperance and municipal organisations.

Sponsored by municipal and reforming interests, notably temperance organisations, these concert series were the other area of music hall entertainments that had expanded enormously by the 1890s. They had begun in 1854 with the introduction of the Glasgow Abstainer's Union's popular Saturday Night Concerts, which continued uninterrupted until 1914, and were followed in 1872 by the Good Templars' Harmonic Association's 'Bursts' at Bridgeton, College Street and Wellington Palace in the Gorbals, and by Glasgow Corporation's own concert series which began in 1888. By 1899 the annual attendance for the Corporation Penny concerts had grown to 216,000 across the four venues where they were held, increased from just over 40,000 in the 1890/91 season.[112]

The latest manifestation of this reformist presence in the local entertainment field was a morally improving music hall, the People's Palace, which aimed to attract the respectable working class, and was one of the rival halls whose competition had helped to force Kean into bankruptcy. Although this original People's Palace in Watson Street had closed by 1898, having been effectively bought out by improving interests who wanted possession of the name, in the same year this reforming group opened their new People's Palace of Arts on Glasgow Green. In the process they consolidated the middle-class project to appropriate the open spaces of the Green to the cause of rational recreation, attempts at which, as we have seen earlier, had been so hotly resisted by public opinion fifty or so years before.[113] However if the arrival of syndicated variety had greatly intensified competition for independent music hall proprietors, the inroads made by these temperance-sponsored concert series and initiatives like the People's Palace into the commercial entertainment sector had left the way clear for private impresarios to play the same game. As Chris Waters has observed:

> The idea that moral improvement—a central demand of rational recreation— could coexist with laissez-faire principles in the provision of entertainment was seized upon by numerous entrepreneurs, eager to gain the

support of those who would readily condemn all forms of commercial recreation. By carefully studying, and then deploying the language of the enemy, entrepreneurs hoped to disarm many of their critics.[114]

In fact the very ubiquity of this new form of address among entrepreneurs served to dilute its impact. While Rossborough's adoption of rational recreation in the 1860s had been original and innovative, in a way that lent his motives credibility, Hubner's claims to people's champion status seemed transparent and limited: in contrast to Rossborough's detailed scheme, Hubner seems to have offered no wider stratagem to support his assertion of class-based support for working people's entertainment. The unconvincing nature of his policy seems to reflect several factors. One was that, in respect of improvement, and its ability to provide a dynamic ideology, the moment had passed. A second was that Hubner's own pattern of activity suggests that, although happy to pursue the policy of working-class venues as a marketing resort, his own instincts lay in the other end of the market: that as a product of a modern business culture of modernity and new technology, his instincts lay in exploring the top end of the variety market, very much the direction of cutting-edge developments in the late 1890s.

This was confirmed by Hubner's next venture, in which, following Moss' example, he sought to provide an upmarket family entertainment that combined music hall with elements of circus and scenic spectacle. The result, the luxurious Hippodrome in Sauchiehall Street, opened in 1902, boasted a circular auditorium with a central circus-style ring which could be hydraulically lowered and flooded with water for aquatic spectaculars. However ticket prices were high and the venue failed within two years. Whether Hubner himself was financially damaged is unknown. But from March 1904 his advertisements for the Britannia ceased to appear in the weekly *Glasgow Programme*, presumably indicating closure. On 26 September adverts announced the re-opening of the hall under the new management of George Saphrini, with James Anderson as lessee. Saphrini had been a performer and was later to resurface during the First World War as a variety agent. But his tenure of the Britannia was short-lived, and a year later, in October 1905, Hubner briefly resumed his management.

There seems little evidence that the working-class music hall made much impression in boosting the Britannia's business or attracting a new respectable clientele. But if Hubner's Britannia existed at the lower end of the market, the hall was none the less vibrant. At night Argyle Street

became 'the Sauchiehall Street of a slightly poorer class', where 'the lads and lasses of Gorbals and Gallowgate come daffing in crowds, chivvying one another into the streets and up the entries, conducting their love-making by means of slaps and "dunches,"', and where 'If the nights are rainy, the young folk have either of the two "Wonderlands" (Bostock's and Crouch's) or the "Brit" for their solace.'[115]

Conclusion

The Britannia provides a case study of both the development of a music hall in a specific urban context, and of its relationship to the changing moral and regulatory climate in which it was required to operate.

In this chapter I have suggested that the hall's management between 1859 and 1900 represented a tension between two influences. The first was improvement, the religiously-inspired impulse to improve the material and moral condition of society, which in Glasgow played a determining role in municipal policy, and led to a keen supervision of the moral conduct of entertainments in the city. And the second was the commodification, or commercial exploitation, of music hall, which had originated in the free and easies of the Saltmarket, before evolving into a lucrative entertainment industry that, by the 1860s, involved purpose-build premises and considerable capital investment. The Britannia's development demonstrates the complex strategies its managers used to negotiate their path between these two influences, in attempting to placate or appease the first, in order to capitalise on the second.

Of the two, improvement was the more dynamic influence in this period, given its ideological importance in municipal policymaking in the decades up to the 1890s, and ability to involve entertainment entrepreneurs in local networks centred on commerce, respectability and religion. In fact, evidence of accommodation of reformist agendas was apparent from the Britannia's inception. While John Brand, the first manager, bowed to magistrates by opening the hall on a temperance basis, his successor, H.T. Rossborough, systematically cultivated liberal progressive opinion by his adoption of improving rhetoric, refurbishment of the hall along aesthetically elevated lines, and by his introduction of improved codes of dress and behaviour for his working-class audiences.

The respectability that attached to improvement was not only vested in language and behaviour: it was also articulated by the physical features and spatial relationships of the refurbished venue, the improved layout of

the auditorium, spaciousness of its halls and entrances, and the enhancement of the Britannia's handsome Italianate façade. This was a feature coincidentally inherited by the hall's original managers which, when given suitable adornment, as in the 1869 refurbishment, provided an impressive statement of aesthetic substance. The weight of the statements provided by these features signalled the Britannia's significance as a public place. In exploiting the building's prime location, they also located the Britannia within the architectural and planning discourse which sought to frame Trongate as a site of modern cosmopolitan social interaction, further distancing the music hall from the tawdriness of tavern associations.

Rossborough's skilful deployment of improving rhetoric therefore demonstrated his appreciation of the importance of perceptions and appearances, in a society that took a strongly performative view of what constituted respectability. The middle-class religious constituencies which were most exercised with the moral supervision of popular entertainment, namely evangelical and temperance activists, very rarely actually visited music halls. When they did, as in the furore over lewd acts that followed an employer's visit to the Whitebait in 1875, they were invariably shocked and offended by the subversiveness of what Dagmar Kift has characterised as 'songs, sketches, performances and forms of communication whose easy-going freedom appeared to express contempt for middle class values and demonstrated a huge gulf between working and middle class cultures'.[116] What was most disturbing was the possibility such visits revealed of a parallel, autonomous working-class culture, which rejected many of the social mores that the working classes were happy to assume in other social contexts, but which middle-class opinion had presumed were embedded in their outward appearance. Peter Bailey has explored this performative aspect of working-class role-playing, as a pragmatic response to social situations which might require conformity with particular normative values, such as church attendance, in order to secure a job or consolidate one's socio-economic status.[117] Such behaviour certainly resonates with urban Scottish society, where, as Callum Brown has pointed out, 'Victorian churchmen had a tendency to perceive those they preached to as "middle class" since they strove to dress appropriately, to pay their seat rents and contributions to church funds.'[118] Brown, who incidentally rejects the evangelical premise that the Scottish proletariat were 'uniformly, or … even generally alienated from religion', is here speaking of church attenders, who may not have been disposed to visit music halls. However it was also the case that middle-class evangelical missionaries,

working under the 'aggressive' system of regular visits to targeted homes in deprived areas like Tron Parish, which surrounded the Britannia, were so persistent, and indeed, so desperate to identify signs of a potential commitment to spiritual self-reliance, that they were inclined to detect it where there might have been only reluctant or socially-coerced compliance. In these circumstances the path of least resistance must have sometimes been very appealing for the subjects of their repeated attentions.

Rossborough's own situation may have reflected an element of similar performative flexibility. Certainly, once inside the hall, the improvement-minded impresario seems to have given way to the skin-of-the-teeth operator, who, on more than one occasion, was very much at the mercy of his audience. One account mentions the ugly scenes when a clog-dancer failed to appear for a heavily-advertised challenge competition, in which a full-scale riot was averted by the narrowest of margins. Another concerns a Britannia audience heckling a performer so brutally that Rossborough had to stay on stage for the duration of the act. These images give the lie to the middle-class notion of a patrician manager, dictating manners to his audience. They suggest rather the model of a caterer, who supplied his clients with the product they desired, but was held accountable if it was found unsatisfactory. In any case, the indications of this period are that, notwithstanding the improvements to presentational aspects, the performances themselves, in terms of artists and performing material, were very much dictated by audience demand. As I will discuss in the next chapter, one indication of this was the popularity of Irish performers at the Britannia, which reflected the strong Irish immigrant presence in the immediate locality.

The impression of music hall I have developed is then of a popular commercial form that was also at least partly an expression of working-class popular culture, in terms of audience 'ownership' of the performance. In this respect, it could be seen as representing a reclamation or reassertion of working-class cultural agency, following the suppression of the original formative free-and-easy culture of the Saltmarket by reformers and city authorities. Writers such as Peter Bailey are rightly wary of tendencies to view music hall as 'a prime locus of an authentic working class sensibility'.[119] My own view qualifies and problematises this by discussing audiences in terms of pluralities, and by being careful to distinguish music's hall's status as both a cultural and commercial entity. Whatever else it was in different times and contexts, music hall was always a commercial, commodified form, governed by market forces, in which audiences

were exploited by managers, often for considerable profit. The socially dexterous Rossborough was certainly 'of' the music hall, in that he had worked as a licensee and acting manager, and married the widow of a favourite Saltmarket saloon singer, Paddy McGowan. But he also earned a fortune from the Britannia, leaving on his death at the age of forty nine the enormous sum of £42,000 and an extensive villa at Mount Vernon.

The latter part of this phase of the Britannia's activity, from the 1890s, saw a marked relaxing of the rhetoric of improvement, as its influence slackened off. The re-opening of the hall in the late 1880s under Rossborough's widow saw the first recourse to the venue's history and place in local affections as a selling point, a promotional trope that was to increasingly feature to compensate for the fact that the Britannia was now an aging venue. By the late 1890s Hubner's 'old Brit' was advertised as a working-class hall. The emphases of these different phases —the Britannia as socially 'improving', as the reflexive 'old Brit' of familiar association, and as self-designated working-class hall—were all strategies consciously adopted to maximise the hall's appeal within the shifting local entertainment market. However in the late 1890s a combination of social factors and technological developments were to lead to the emergence of a new mass leisure culture which would transform the landscape for commercial entertainments in the early twentieth century. In this expanded market, the commercial imperative outgrew the strictures of the moral framework by which entertainments had been constrained for the previous half century. While this new entertainment market and its implications will be explored in Chap. 5 the next two chapters will concentrate on following the thread of popular cultural interaction through the Britannia's representation of ethnic groups.

Notes

1. *Dumbarton Herald*, Sept. 1856, 2.
2. *Dumbarton Herald*, Sept. 1856, 2.
3. J.M.E. Ross, *William Ross of Cowcaddens: A Memoir* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1905), 90.
4. *Lennox Herald*, 2 Jan. 1897, 2–3.
5. In a conversation at the Britannia, James Deans, aged seventy-eight, remembered being taken to the hall—then the Panopticon—as a nine-year old boy in the 1930s, but had no recollection of the building's main entrance on Trongate: he explained that his parents were Salvation Army members, and he had been brought without their knowledge by his grandfather, who

made sure they used the side entrance in the adjoining wynd to avoid the risk of being seen entering. Letter from James Deans, 20 Sep. 2003.

6. Charles Withers, 'The Demographic History of the City, 1831–1911', in *Glasgow*, *vol. II*, *1830–1912*, ed. W. Hamish Fraser and Irene Maver (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 142–3.

7. This section draws on Irene Maver, *Glasgow* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 59–82.

8. Tracy C. Davis, 'Let Glasgow Flourish', in *Scenes from Provincial Stages*: *Essays in Honour of Kathleen Barker*, ed. Richard Foulkes (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1994), 98–113.

9. Davis, 'Let Glasgow Flourish', 108–09.

10. Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 102.

11. W. Hamish Fraser, 'From Civic Gospel to Municipal Socialism', in *Cities, Class and Communication*: *Essays in Honour of Asa Briggs*, ed. Derek Fraser (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 58–80, here 64.

12. Callum Brown describes evangelicalism as 'not so much a theological system as a framework of response to the emergence of modern urban society'. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1717*, 101–10.

13. W. Hamish Fraser and Irene Maver, 'Tackling the Problems', in *Glasgow volume II*: *1830–1912*, 394–440, here 419.

14. Robert Buchanan, *The Spiritual Destitution of the Masses in Glasgow* (Glasgow: Blackie, 1851), 6.

15. Robert Buchanan, *The Schoolmaster in the Wynds* (Glasgow, 1850), 19.

16. James Schmiechen, 'Glasgow of the Imagination: Architecture, townscape and society', in *Glasgow volume II*: *1830–1912*, 486–518, here 491.

17. Brian Edwards, 'Glasgow City Improvements, 1866–1901', in *Glasgow*: *The Forming of the City*, ed. Peter Reed (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 84–103, here 88–9.

18. Schmiechen, 'Glasgow of the Imagination', 493.

19. For the regulation of Argyle Street see R.J. Morris, 'New Spaces for Scotland, 1800–1900', in *A History of Everyday life in Scotland 1800 to 1900*, ed. Trevor Griffiths and Graeme Morton (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 225–55.

20. Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and authority and the English industrial city 1840–1914*, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007). For Sennett see 68.

21. 'The Sights of Glasgow', Mitchell scrapbook 'Old Glasgow Street Songs', Mitchell Library GC 398.5 GLA.

22. W. Hamish Fraser, 'Necessities in the Nineteenth Century', in *A History of Everyday Life in Scotland*, *1800 to 1900*, 60–88, here 72.

23. *Glasgow Examiner*, 7 Jan..1860, 1.

24. *Glasgow Weekly Mail*, 24 Nov.. 1888, 3.

25. 'An Old Stager', *Stage Reminiscences, being recollections, chiefly personal, of celebrated Theatrical and Musical Performers during the last fifty years* (Glasgow: Helderick and son, 1866), 214.

26. Elspeth King, *Scotland Sober and Free. The Temperance Movement 1829–1979* (Glasgow: Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, 1979), 18.

27. Maver, *Glasgow*, 104.

28. John Burnett, 'Small Showmen and Large Firms: the development of Glasgow Fair in the nineteenth century', *Review of Scottish Culture*, 17, 2004–5, 2–89. For the historic Fair see also Elspeth King, 'Popular Culture in Glasgow', in *The Working Class in Glasgow 1750–1914*, ed. R.A. Cage (Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1987), 142–88.

29. See Irene Maver, 'Glasgow's Public Parks and the Community, 1850–1914: a Case Study in Scottish Civic Interventionism', *Urban History*, vol. 25, part 3, Dec.. 1998, 323–47.

30. *Glasgow Weekly Mail*, 24 Nov.. 1888, 3.

31. *Glasgow Weekly Mail*, 17 Nov..–28 Dec.. 1888. Although the articles carry no byline, an item in the *Professional Gazette and Advertiser* in November 1889 states 'Mr James Anderson, Comedian and author, notes that his sketches "The Auld Saltmarket and Trongate—its Closes, Taverns and Singing Saloons," that appeared lately in the Glasgow Weekly Mail, are about to be published in book form.' *Barr's Professional Gazette and Advertiser*, no. 188, Sat. 16 Nov.. 1889, 4.

32. *Glasgow Weekly Mail*, 29 Dec.. 1888, 3.

33. Adam McNaughtan, 'A Century of Saltmarket Literature, 1790–1890,' in *Six Centuries of the Provincial Book Trade in Britain*, ed. Peter Isaac (Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies, 1990), 165–80.

34. Hamish Fraser and Maver, 'Tackling the Problems', 431.

35. Hamish Fraser and Maver, 'Tackling the Problems', 400.

36. In fact the narrative of music halls proper as offering an improvement on previous entertainments was established remarkably quickly: as early as the 1860s the Shakespeare saloon of only ten years before was already being spoken of dismissively as 'in reality the only place where the élite could take their glass and hear a good song, but it was in the Saltmarket', while other famous halls like the Jupiter and Oddfellows were said to have Dec.lined to 'the most abominable dens of dissipation and dirt, the greater portion of the customers being loose characters, idle boys and girls who were amused by a set of the most coarse and vulga (*sic*) individuals who ever attempted to "shout" or "spout"'. *The Amateur and Theatrical and Concert hall Reporter*, No. V111, 6 Apr.. 1867, 4.

37. *Glasgow Weekly Mail*, 1 Dec.. 1888, 7.

38. Glasgow City Council Statutory List, 109–21 Trongate and 9 New Wynd; The Theatres Trust website entry; Gomme, Andor & Walker, David, *Architecture of Glasgow, revised edn* (London: Lund Humphries/John Smith & Sons, 1987), 109n.

39. 'The Evolution of the Glasgow Music Halls', *Glasgow Evening News*, 26 Dec. 1905, 3.
40. *Era*, 8 Jan.. 1860. 11.
41. *Era*, 22 Jan.., 1860, 11.
42. *Era*, 22 Apr.., 1860, 11.
43. *Dumbarton Herald*, 1 Nov..1855, 2.
44. W.F. Frame, *Tells His Own Story* (Glasgow: Wm Holmes, 1907), 32–4.
45. Although different sources give various dates for the Milton Colosseum's opening, the hall's own advertisement in the *Era* of Sunday 10 July 1859, states 'This large and beautiful palace was opened on Monday last, and was crowded in every part', confirming that the hall opened on Monday 4 July 1859.
46. For Baylis see T.J. Colquhoun, 'My Memories of Glasgow Music Halls', *Thomson's Weekly News* (The Weekly News), 5 May 1928, 3.
47. *Era*, 18 Junee, 1892, 14.
48. Glasgow Post Office Directory, 1858–59; for soda bottle see Mitchell Library Glasgow Scrapbooks no. 3, 113.
49. *Evening News*, 26 Dec.. 1905, 3.
50. *Glasgow Sentinel*, 26 Dec.. 1868, 2.
51. 'Increase of Singing Saloons', *Era*, 18 Dec. 1859.
52. *Era*, Sunday, 18 Dec. 1859.
53. 'The Glasgow Gaiety Licence', *The Era*, 28 Feb.. 1891, 18. For a fuller account see Maloney, *Scotland and the Music Hall*, *1850–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 73–4.
54. *Era*, 18 June 1892, 14.
55. *Era*, 18 Dec. 1859, 10.
56. For Manchester see Patrick Joyce's reference to Philomen Eva's PhD research on Popular Song and Social Identity in Victorian Manchester in Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom. Liberalism and the Modern City* (London: Verso, 2003), 206–10.
57. James Hamilton Bone, *Glasgow in 1901* (Wm Hodge & Co, 1901; White Cockade, ed., 2001), 176–77.
58. See Simon Gunn, 'The middle class, modernity and the provincial city: Manchester, c.1840–80', in *Gender*, *Civic Culture and Consumerism*, 115–16.
59. Advertisements for the Milton Colosseum claimed that it 'will hold about a thousand persons (being more than double any other establishment of the kind in Scotland)': *The Era*, 29 May 1859, 1.
60. I am grateful to Maureen Smith for details of Rossborough's family background.
61. *The Amateur: and Theatrical and Concert Hall Reporter* (ed. Geo. S. Brown, publ. Every Fortnight), No. VIII, April 1867.
62. He is listed as General Manager in Britannia advertisements from 1867: see *Glasgow Sentinel*, 19 Oct.ober 1867, 8.

63. 'Camlachie Tam', 'Written and Sung by Harry Linn', The Poet's Box, no. 403, 29.6.72, ML Glasgow Collection.

64. Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance*: *The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 98–127.

65. *Glasgow Sentinel*, 'Whitebait Concert Room', 2 Jan. 1869.

66. *Glasgow Sentinel*, 2 Jan. 1869.

67. *Glasgow Sentinel*, 'The Britannia Music Hall', 25 Sept.. 1869, 2.

68. The features of the new Alhambra were enthusiastically received, the iron pillars and pilasters 'as elegant and graceful as the original model', while the Moorish archways of the cornicework, its ornamentation as yet unpainted, was to be finished in crimson, gold and blue, 'in producing which effect the architect of the Alhambra Court in the Crystal Palace but moderately succeeded'. *Glasgow Sentinel*, 12 Oct.. 1867, 4.

69. 'Necessity for Recreation', *Glasgow Sentinel* 14 Jan.1860, 1; 'Sunday Bands', 28 Jan. 1860, 4; 'The Saviours of Society', 22 Sept.., 1860.

70. 'The "Angel Gabriel" and the Devil', and also 'Down with the Devil and the Theatres', *Glasgow Sentinel*, 28 Sept. 1867, 5. For the original 'Angel Gabriel', John Sayers Orr, see James Handley, *The Irish in Scotland* (Glasgow: John S Burns, 1964), 234–6.

71. Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 98–127, here 108, 120.

72. *Glasgow Eastern Standard*, 8 Aug. 1925, 7.

73. James Schmiechen, 'Glasgow of the Imagination,' 498.

74. *Glasgow Sentinel*, 25 Sept. 1869, 2.

75. *Glasgow Sentinel*, 23 Oct. 1869, 2.

76. In a society which increasingly judged by appearances, concern over dress remained a flashpoint of inter-class tension well into the twentieth century: when rowdy apprentice engineers from Clyde shipyards ran amok during a night out in Glasgow theatres, their delinquency was signalled by the fact that many had 'emitted [sic] to exchange their ordinary oil-stained working garb for their "braws"'.*Glasgow Evening News*, 14 Feb. 1905, 6.

77. *Glasgow Sentinel*, 27 Nov. 1869, 2.

78. William C Darrah, *Cartes de Visite in Nineteenth Century Photography* (Gettysburg: 1981), 36.

79. Tracy C. Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage*, *1800–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 192–97. For London, see Peter Bailey, 'A Community of Friends: Business and Good Fellowship in London Music Hall Management, c.1860–1885', in *Music Hall*: *the Business of Pleasure*, ed. Bailey, (Milton Keynes: Open University, 1986), 37.

80. *North British Daily Mail*, 22 Feb. 1875; also 24, 26 Feb. , 2, 3, 8, 13 Mar.; for a detailed examination see Dagmar Kift, *The Victorian Music Hall*: *Culture*, *Class and Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 115–20.

81. Kift, *The Victorian Music Hall*, 117.
82. Ian Spring, *Phantom Village*: *The Myth of the New Glasgow* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990), 53–4. S.G. Checkland, *The Upas Tree*: *Glasgow 1875–1975 … And After 1975–1980* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1981), 23.
83. Chris Waters, *British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 24.
84. W. Hamish Fraser, 'From Civic Gospel to Municipal Socialism', in *Cities, Class and Communication*: *Essays in Honour of Asa Briggs*, ed. Derek Fraser, (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 58–80, here 65.
85. S.G. Checkland, *The Upas Tree*, 29.
86. 'The Music Hall', *The Bailie*, 18 Dec. 1872, 3.
87. 'Local Jottings', *The Professional and Authors Journal*, no. 8, series 4, w/e 28 Feb. 1885.
88. *Ibid*.
89. In fact Rossborough's estate comprised a property at Old Monklands, near Glasgow valued at £20,000, and £40,000 in other assets; see *Daily Gazette for Middlesbrough*, 27 June 1888. In addition to charitable bequests, Rossborough's will also made provision for his staff at the Britannia, according to a sliding-scale based on length of service: male staff with more than two years continuous employment were eligeable for two weeks wages, while females employed for more than two years received £2. I am grateful for Maureen Smith for these references. See also Fred Lock, 'Theatres of Great Britain, No. 3. Glasgow', *The Playgoer*, Apr. 1902; 1881 British Census; 'Roving Jack', *The Professional* w/e 15 Oct. 1887.
90. *The Professional and Authors' Journal*, no. 62, vol. II, w/e 13 Mar. 1886, 'Notes by Roving Jack'.
91. *The Professional and Authors' Journal*, w/e 20 Mar. 1886.
92. *Thomson's Weekly News* (The Weekly News), Saturday 26 May 1928, 14.
93. James Baylis' widow similarly took over the management of the Scotia when her husband dropped dead in the street, running the hall successfully for many years, and Mrs Shearer also continued the management of the Whitebait after her husband James's death, reapplying for the license in her own name. See also Tracy C Davis, 'Female Managers, Lessees, Proprietors of the British Stage (in 1914)', *Nineteenth Century Theatre*, 28:2 (winter 2000): 115–43.
94. 'Re-Opening of the "Britannia" Music Hall', *Professional* no. 182, 24 Aug. 1889.
95. Peter Bailey, 'Theatres of Entertainment/Spaces of Modernity: Rethinking the British Popular Stage 1890–1914', *Nineteenth Century Theatre*, 26:1 (summer 1998), 5–24, here 11–12.
96. 'Re-Opening of the "Britannia" Music Hall', *Professional*, 24 Aug. 1889.

97. 'James Curran', *Professional*, No. 198, 5 Apr. 1890.

98. *Glasgow Eastern Standard*, 13 June 1925, 7.

99. Harry McShane and Joan Smith, *Harry McShane*: *No Mean Fighter* (London: Pluto Press, 1978), 5.

100. Andrew Crowhurst,'Big Men and Big Business: The Transition from "Caterers" to "Magnates" in British Music-Hall Entrepreneurship, 1850–1914', *Nineteenth Century Theatre*, 25:1 (summer 1997), 33–59. Tracy C. Davis,'Edwardian Management and the Structures of Industrial Capitalism', in *The Edwardian Theatre*: *Essays on Performance and the Stage*, ed. Michael R. Booth and Joel H. Kaplan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 111–30.

101. Crowhurst, 'Big Men and Big Business', 33–7, 50–2. Peter Bailey, 'A Community of Friends: Business and Good Fellowship in London Music Hall Management, c.1860–1885', in *Music Hall*: *The Business of Pleasure*, ed. Bailey (Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1986), 33–52.

102. 'Mr William Kean', *Quiz*, 26 Apr. 1894.

103. *Daily Record*, 26 Aug. 1896. However an *Era* report from October suggests that the electric light was not operational until that month, stating 'The latest improvement is the installation of the electric light, which illuminated the hall for the first time on Saturday night.' *The Era*, 20 Oct. 1894, 17. As the paper was issued on a Saturday, the date referred to must have been Saturday 13 October 1894.

104. Kean's Statement, Sederunt Book, 20–33, Court of Session Sequestrations, SRO.

105. A.V. Christie, *More Brass Tacks and a Fiddle*, *vol. 2.* (Kilmarnock: 1944), 70.

106. Alastair Michie, 'Scotland: Strategies of Centralisation', in *All Our Yesterdays*: *90 Years of British Cinema*, ed. Charles Barr (London: BFI, 1986), 252–71, 254–55. For the fairground and music hall milieu of early Scottish film exhibitors see Adrienne Scullion, 'Geggies, Empires, Cinemas: The Scottish Experience of Early Film', *Picture House*,. 21 (summer 1996), 13–19.

107. For New Eastern Alhambra see 'Notes by the Way', *Glasgow Programme*, w/c 15 Nov. 1897.

108. Britannia, Empire adverts, *Glasgow Programme*, 6 Feb. 1899, 5–6.

109. *Evening Citizen*, Saturday 16 Dec. 1905, 4.

110. 'Mr Hubner', *Glasgow Programme*, 20 June 1898, 4.

111. Waters, *British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture*, 24.

112. *North British Daily Mail*, 6 Jan. 1900, 2.

113. Maver,'Glasgow's Public Parks and the Community, 1850–1914', 342–44.

114. Waters, *British Socialists and th Politics of Popular Culture 1884–1914*, 24.

115. Muir, *Glasgow in 1901*, 240–41.

116. Kift, *The Victorian Music Hall*, 177.

117. Peter Bailey, '"Will the real Bill Banks please stand up?" Towards a Role Analysis of Mid-Victorian Working-Class Respectability', *The Journal of Social History*, 12:3 (1979), 336–53.
118. Callum Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707*, 120–21.
119. Peter Bailey 'Introduction', in *Music Hall*: *The Business of Pleasure*, xviii.

'Flying Down the Saltmarket': The Irish on the Glasgow Music Hall Stage

> Little Mackenzie danced the Highland Fling in the national costume, and afterwards, in the attire of a Son of Erin, danced a jig, to the satisfaction of all.[1]

In 1946 Robert McLeish's play *The Gorbals Story* was produced by Glasgow Unity Theatre at the Queen's Theatre, a local variety theatre by Glasgow Cross.[2] It became a huge hit, touring all over Scotland, playing seasons in the West End of London, and being made into a film. The play made an enormous impact because it depicted the grim reality of post-war life for many in the city: set in a rundown lodging house, it followed the lives of the residents as they struggled to overcome economic and social barriers to happiness. While *The Gorbals Story* reflected wider disillusionment, its particular focus was the chronic housing shortage, which led to a tense first night when the Lord Provost and council dignitaries were lectured from the stage before the performance by the leader of a rent strike. But the play also spoke to the modern city and the changing nature of urban Scottish society. Glasgow Unity were a socialist company that aimed to depict the reality of life in modern Scotland. The characters in *The Gorbals Story* echoed this by representing the diversity of urban Scottish society: among those frequenting the house are Hector, an islander originally from Mull, Ahmed, an Indian pedlar, and Peter Reilly, an Irish labourer, and his wife and daughter. This urban mix, which was ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse, and raised new questions about the nature and definitions of Scottish identity, had its roots in the immigration and social

developments of the nineteenth century. Its exploration in the 1940s through the popular political theatre of the time—and Glasgow Unity chose to play in variety theatres as a way of reaching working-class audiences—offers a natural segue to music hall, the people's theatre of the nineteenth century, the period when the seeds of this diversity were sown, and the medium through which issues of ethnicity and national identity were played out on the popular stage.

Modern criticism of Scottish identity essentially revolves around two disciplinary approaches: that concerning political and historical analysis of Scottish unionist history, a field largely dominated by the work of Tom Nairn, and a broader sociological approach based on that of Benedict Anderson, discussed earlier, which places Scotland within the framework of wider international movements towards cultural nationalisms. Both offer important insights which will help determine how to evaluate the significance of ethnic groups within Scottish urban society.

The catalyst for the first of these approaches, Tom Nairn's influential book *The Break-up of Britain* (1977), offers a post-Marxist analysis of the reasons for the late development of political nationalism in Scotland, which only emerged in the early 1970s. Anticipating the demise of the United Kingdom as a political entity, Nairn asks why in Scotland's case the impetus for popular protest took the form of a resurgent nationalism, rather than that of a class-based movement. His thesis is that the reasons lay in the historical character of the British state: that the unique circumstances of Britain's emergence as the first industrial society resulted in a subsequent inability to renew itself in the second phase of industrial development experienced by its later-developing competitors. The result, in Nairn's analysis, was a society that proved unable to modernise, and which relied on a process of overseas expansion to compensate for its increasing economic ossification.

For Scotland the upshot of this malaise was that the Scottish middle classes and entrepreneurial elites, allowed a wide degree of cultural autonomy and their own legal, religious and educational institutions under the post-Union accommodation of 'North Britain', were deprived of the impetus to develop what Nairn identifies as the full romantic nationalism that their circumstances would otherwise suggest. Instead, the stream of Scottish culture was 'deformed', the absence of an intellectually developed national aesthetic resulting in a two-tier, impoverished 'cultural sub-nationalism' which produced the 'tartan monster' of the Kailyard and 'kitsch' tartanry.[3]

Nairn's work has been highly provocative and his reading has come in for extensive criticism. (Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull, for example, while sharing aspects of his critique, suggest Nairn is too ready to accept denigratory readings of Scottish art and culture[4] and condemn the blanket negativity of his inferiorist approach to Scottish culture, by which 'there are no shades or contours: *everything* stands condemned'.[5])

However, for us the key aspect of Nairn's work concerns the role he assigns to popular culture. While denunciation of the 'kitsch' of tartanry and the Kailyard is ideologically central to Nairn's reading of the fragmented nature of Scottish identity, the characterisation of other wider forms of mass commercial popular culture, including music hall, as somehow debased, representative of, if not actually inseparable from, a slothful, stagnant society, is one which permeates his work. This implied scepticism as to whether mass popular culture in fact has a positive social contribution to make is echoed by some other historians. Christopher Harvie, writing of mid-twentieth century Scotland, summarises the scope of working-class leisure in grim, joyless terms that suggest affinities with Gareth Stedman-Jones's 'culture of consolation'.[6] In both cases the inference is of popular culture as a product of social developments, almost a bodily function, rather than an active agent that might contribute to them.

The figure widely taken to embody Nairn's analysis of a distorted Scottish culture—Scottish music hall's native performing genre, the kilted Scotch comic, exemplified in the public imagination by Harry Lauder— has been the subject of intense critical debate concerning its significance as an icon of Scottish identity. Denounced in the 1970s and 1980s as the tartan kitsch symbol of Nairn's 'cultural sub-nationalism',[7] the figure has more recently experienced a partial rehabilitation by writers who view it as a response to the need for a new version of Scottish identity following the upheavals of urban industrialisation: in this reading the figure was not a 'gross caricature', but a knowing, hybridised construct that rather offered 'symbols of a nationality which, under normal circumstances, audiences were never allowed to express'.[8]

But if the Scotch comic was part of the re-making (or re-imagining) of Scottish identity, the other side of the negotiation surely involved the new immigrant groups present in Scottish cities. How did these sorts of stereotypical national stage representations work in respect of immigrant communities?

Nairn acknowledges social cohesion as the redeeming factor, the glue that holds the whole construct together. But while Nairn defines it largely

in class terms, ascribing its working to the fluidity of shifting interactions between classes and social groups, he makes no reference to the ethnic components which featured prominently in the polyglot context of nineteenth-century urban Scottish society, ethnic and cultural groupings whose presence surely formed part of the process of cultural negotiation and which had to be accommodated in the cultural discourse that produced this social equilibrium.

Glasgow's nineteenth-century expansion as an industrial centre was fuelled by an enormous influx of population from a diverse range of groups. As well as Gaelic-speaking migrants from the highlands and islands, and rural incomers from lowland areas, those drawn by the prospect of employment in the city's industrial and manufacturing concerns also included sizeable communities of Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish and Jewish immigrants from Russia and eastern Europe. All featured on the imaginative map of the cityscape, Glasgow's rich ethno-cultural mix being recalled in recorded memories of childhood from the 1930s as diverse and polyglot.

If the assimilation of these groups, who arrived in different phases and on different scales, was an issue for cultural negotiation, then popular culture was surely a significant forum for their social integration into the life of the wider community. And if we accept this premise, then their representation in different forms of popular culture, and on popular stages such as that offered by music hall, represents a significant medium through which we can gain impressions of both their social and economic impact, and their influence on the imaginative life of the wider community. In this respect, popular culture could be seen as an instrument of integration, a shaper of the society which it mediated, and a facilitator of the cohesion which Nairn sees as such a resilient social tool.

The intense debate provoked by Nairn's work has served to intensify perceptions of nationalism as involving disputed territory, in which parties seek to appropriate a cultural legacy to their respective causes.

Moreover, the idea of nation as romantic, mythic construct comes with an innate vulnerability, which Homi Bhabha suggests 'emerges from a growing awareness that, despite the certainty with which historians speak of the "origins" of nation as a sign of the "modernity" of society, the cultural temporality of the nation inscribes a much more transitional social reality'.[9] In this reading the imaginative idea of nation is closely bound up with boundaries and marginality, both material and metaphorical, with the groups and communities which inhabit this marginal territory

paradoxically achieving through their situation a place at the centre of the shifting cultural negotiation that forms the heart of the discussion.

These ideas of temporality, of negotiation and cultural hybridity, are themes which might hold the key to the exploration of the place of immigrant groupings and identity in nineteenth-century Glasgow, where their representation in the reductive world of the popular stage fed into the context of the debate over Scottish identity, given the enormous demographic and economic changes that had taken place.

Nairn then has pointed up the social cohesion of British society, but ascribed its success to inter-class negotiation between élites and pressure groups, and overlooks the contribution of new social groupings such as immigrant ethnic communities, which featured prominently in the urban landscape of nineteenth-century Glasgow, and must have contributed to the remaking of Scottish identity. However, Anderson's idea of the 'imagined community', based on a shared identity of interests or collective consciousness, disseminated through vernacular forms and popular culture, which would include music hall, seems to envisage a role for such immigrant communities, and the significance of their representations in popular culture. Moreover, the themes of hybridity and cultural negotiation associated with Anderson's ideas provide a way of exploring the role of such groups as the Irish and Jewish immigrant communities, whose relations to wider society seem to have existed on exactly the fluctuating cusp of social interaction that Anderson and Bhabha invoke. By exploring stage representations of Irish and Jewish identities in terms of the connotations of songs, sketches and performing material, and the reception and reporting of their performances, we can gain insights into how such factors as economic competition, political representation, racial prejudice and social interaction affected these communities and the ways they were perceived.

The issue was not one of simply assimilating immigrant communities, but of involving them in the wider process of constructing a newly-imagined version of Scottish identity that would reflect the new urban contexts of late nineteenth-century Scotland. In Glasgow, the cultural impact of Gaelic-speaking 'teuchter' incomers from the Highlands may have been no less alien than that of the Lithuanian miners who settled in Bellshill, or Italian street vendors who sold ice cream and chestnuts on the Trongate for years without ever learning to speak English. In these contexts, the focus of identity revolved not so much around individual ethnicities or cultural groupings, as the wider Scottish context into which they fitted. If society needed to come up with a new version of Scottish

identity to reflect the circumstances of modern urban life, it also needed to find a method of including within or assimilating to this new Scottishness a diverse population whose presence was indisputably now part of the urban cityscape. This ethnic and cultural diversity was incontrovertibly present, as any perusal of journals and newspapers reveals.

Exploring these possibilities, this chapter and the next will examine the popular representations of the Irish and Jewish communities seen on Glasgow stages. Looking at the different scale and impact of their historical presences in the city, we will examine how both communities were depicted in the press and by wider society; whether their representations on popular stages, and particularly in music halls like the Britannia, served to reinforce or counter these perceptions; and what impact these often problematic stage representations had on the social cohesion of Glasgow's developing urban society. Finally, as an example of the evolving phenomena of stage representations, and their growing complexity in the interwar period, we will examine the career of the Glasgow Jewish comedian Ike Freedman (1895–1960), whose use of multiple ethnic personae in his performances took such representations to a new level of sophistication.

In terms of their historic development, the Irish and Jewish experiences of immigration represent different phases and scales of activity. Irish immigration to Scotland began earlier, and in proportional terms had reached its height by the middle decades of the nineteenth century, while Jewish immigration did not begin until the pogroms of the 1880s. The Irish and Jewish communities therefore present markedly contrasting models of immigration.

The Irish Community in Glasgow

In the early nineteenth century the Irish presence in Glasgow was largely associated with migrant seasonal workers. However the Great Famine of the 1840s brought a rapid growth in Irish immigration and, by 1851, 64,185, or 18.2 per cent of Glasgow's total population of 358,951, were Irish-born, in contrast to the national figure for Scotland of 7.2 per cent. Although this mid-century figure was the highpoint of Irish immigration to the city, after which its rate fluctuated, the Irish-born remained a sizable proportion of the population until well into the twentieth century. In 1871 Irish-born inhabitants constituted 14.3 per cent of Glasgow's population, the figure declining to 10 per cent in 1891 and 6 per cent in 1911.[10]

While Irish workers in the pre-famine period had gravitated to eastern districts, with Glasgow Cross providing a gathering place where they competed for hiring against workers from the Highlands, the mid-century saw their spread throughout areas of cheap and insanitary housing in the city centre. By the 1850s the Irish represented a substantial and possibly dominant influence in the densely-populated districts surrounding the Britannia. In 1851 the Rev. Robert Buchanan, minister of the Tron Church parish, which ran from Trongate in the north to Bridgegate in the south, and from Old Wynd in the west to the Saltmarket in the east (see Map 2.1), stated that the local population was 'more than one-half Popish', and that during his tenure, the Irish presence in the parish had grown from 3500 to 6000 of the total population of 12,000 inhabitants in 1850.[11] Official statistics confirm that 45 per cent of St Mary or Tron parish was Irish-born in 1851.

While Irish immigration tailed off in the 1850s and 1860s, and legislation to clear slum housing began to take effect in the 1870s, the parish's proportion of Irish-born inhabitants remained as high as 32 per cent in 1881, after considerable clearances of older housing had taken place in Tron, Bridgegate and the Wynds.[12]

In the popular imagination, the Irish were identified with low-paid, unskilled labour and manual occupations, and moreover with undercutting established rates of pay, strike-breaking and anti-trades union activity. Irish men in particular were associated with drunkenness, fighting and loutish behaviour, with laziness, indolence and stupidity portrayed as their main characteristics. The upshot of this low socio-economic status, their presence in the worst areas of overcrowded slum housing in the city, further associated them with disease and lack of cleanliness, while their Catholicism was regarded as wilful, self-indicting provocation to the Presbyterian beliefs of the indigenous majority. In fact recent research suggests that some widely-held prejudices regarding the Irish community were inaccurate or misconceived on a number of counts: for example, work on Irish immigrant patterns of employment has shown it to have been more diverse and less reliant on lower-skilled occupations than previously believed.[13] The Irish predilection for drunkenness and links to the drinks 'trade' probably takes insufficient account of the scale of Catholic Temperance movements. And the popular misconception that 'Irish' was synonymous with 'Catholic' overlooked the fact that modern estimates suggest 25 per cent of Irish immigrants to Scotland were Protestant, and the majority probably came from urban as opposed to rural contexts, as was popularly believed.[14]

The perceived stereotypical traits of Irish character and behaviour were promoted in the popular entertainment culture of the time through songs, sketches and plays. To this the Irish, like the Jewish immigrant community after them, brought a distinct musical and performing tradition of their own, one which in the Irish case—through the introduction of vigorous Irish step-dancing and hornpipes, together with the knockabout slapstick routines for which Irish acts became famous—perfectly complemented the predilection for physical exuberance and gratification that characterised nineteenth century urban amusements.

The prominence of Irish performers in early music hall meant that a self-consciously mythologised version of Irish culture and identity was already well-established in the Glasgow entertainment world by the 1850s, the period of the Britannia's emergence. In the first instance it was most evident in the output of Irish comic actors, whose work in a repertoire of melodramas and comic plays furnished a rich gallery of characters and situations that formed the basis for excursions into other forms. James Handley wrote of this area that:

> For the lighter moments of the immigrant the playhouse provided fare with a rich native flavour. Indeed in the second half of the nineteenth century the abundance of Irish melodrama on the boards would indicate that the theatre in Scotland looked to the immigrant for solid support. Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Paisley, Greenock and Coatbridge purveyed such robust entertainment as *Peep o' Day* or *Savoureen Deelish*, *Dermot, the Son of Hibernia* or *The Girl of Balliemoyle*, *Whiteboys* or *The Lily of Leinster*, *Charles O'Malley* or *Love, Fun and Fighting*, *The Bleak Hills of Ireland*, *Handy Andy*, *The Irish Emigrant* and *Kathleen Mavourneen*.[15]

While Handley describes the enthusiastic immigrant audience for these Irish entertainments, he also draws a sharp distinction between the intended constituencies for the two types of performance. Irish performers, he suggests, 'catered skilfully for the two sections of their audience: Irish songs and political drama for the immigrants, and the stage Irishmen … for the delectation of the native, much as the Scots comedian by travestying in English music halls the weaknesses of his own country pandered to his southern audience's sense of superiority'.

While Handley was here describing the first half of the nineteenth century, this division between certain Irish stage genres and the stage Irishman per se nevertheless seems highly artificial. The boundaries of popular entertainments like theatre, melodrama, circus and music hall

constantly overlapped and elided, as performers moved freely between formats, repeating and developing themes. The notion that the Irish stage figure did not inflect other forms, or was impervious to, for example, the political undercurrents of the domestic dramas in which he was frequently situated, seems very questionable.

Moreover, invoking comparisons with the Scotch comic, a much more complex cultural construction than Handley allows for, also undermines his claims for the travestied status of the stage Irishman: after all, if the Scotch comic was conceived for English audiences, why was it so demonstrably popular in Scotland? For the stage Irishman to similarly represent a caricature intended purely for 'native' audiences (in this case Scottish, by no means connoting the same associations as the English), would require Irish immigrant audiences to reject or be indifferent to the character, a position which I will argue was far from the case.

To be fair, Handley was decrying the oafish, almost subhuman Irish caricature he identified as the butt of English humour. He was no doubt much more sympathetic to the witty protagonist developed by Dion Boucicault, who 'altered this image by making his Irishman the clever and attractive central character in a play set in Ireland, in which the absurd Englishman, or Anglo-Irishman, makes a fool of himself among the Irish'.[16] But if Boucicault inverted the former dynamic, in the process gaining credit for reinventing the stage Irishman, the figure's context remained firmly Irish and rural. While these dramas clearly spoke to immigrant audiences in Scotland, the question remains as to how the cultural negotiation involving the figure and wider Irish representations generally was advanced by these pieces: why was the potency of the stage Irish figure defined in terms of, or in opposition to, the English? For the Irish in Scotland, a whole new range of issues, involving urban living, religious discrimination and cultural difference surely required the development of more relevant stage representations.

While Irish dramas remained popular until well into the twentieth century, I suggest that music hall took up the baton, developing and renewing Irish stage iconography to reflect the realities of immigrant living. This chapter will rather seek to show that music hall developed and broadened the stage Irishman to adapt it to its Scottish urban context, in ways that offers strong parallels with the development of Irish stereotypes in American vaudeville. The starting place to testing this lies in the interaction between theatre and music hall performers during the latter's formative period.

If Irish dramas were a popular staple of mid-nineteenth century theatre in Scotland, part of their wider significance lay in the vehicles they provided for Irish actors, who used their rich repertoire of comic characters as a springboard to crossover success in the music hall.

For successful actors, a move into the expanding new genre represented a natural progression from popular theatre, a career path we can verify through the patterns of their engagements. The 'Irish Comedian' George Hodson, who appeared at Glover's Prince's Theatre Royal in Glasgow in July and August 1853, was, by July 1865, presenting his 'Irish Entertainment' at Brown's Royal Music Hall, before appearing the following week at the Theatre Royal.[17] In some cases Irish dramas themselves served as vehicles for the transition. Gardiner Coyne, the 'celebrated Irish comedian and vocalist', who appeared in *Kathleen Mavourneen* at the Theatre Royal, Dunlop Street, Glasgow, in 1864, was by 1873 playing his star role of Myles-na-Coppaleen in *The Colleen Bawn* at a music hall, the Southminster Theatre of Varieties in Edinburgh. Moreover by 1895, his Gardiner Coyne's Combination was on the bill at the Britannia, where they were kept over for a second week performing their 'laughable Irish sketch, "Maccaroni"'. In other words, Coyne's theatrical actor-management had evolved into an Irish sketch company on the halls.[18]

If these dramas provided a prototype for the Irish stage persona, Irish performers and managers also played a founding role in the development of Scottish music hall from its beginnings in the 1840s. The pervasiveness of this Irish influence was evident in professional and entrepreneurial links between Scotland and Ireland in the 1850s. James Shearer, proprietor of the Whitebait concert rooms in St Enoch's Wynd, was also manager of the Imperial Colosseum in Belfast in 1857, while Charles Levy, of the Shakespeare Saloon in the Saltmarket, another of Glasgow's leading early singing saloons, acquired a Dublin venue, Byrne's Concert Hall, in the same year. Irish and Scottish performers regularly travelled between the two countries, and this closely entwined relationship, based on a commonality of shared Celtic cultural perspectives, and facilitated by improvements in sea travel, continued throughout the nineteenth century.[19]

The Irish remained integral to Glasgow's music hall culture throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, moving freely between roles as performers, managers and entrepreneurs.

The Britannia itself was located at the heart of this Irish influence. The high levels of Irish immigration to its surrounding districts meant

that from its opening in 1859 the 'Brit', like its soon-to-be neighbours, the Scotia in Stockwell Street, and the Star, in Watson Street by Glasgow Cross, had a significant Irish presence in its audiences, and featured Irish acts prominently on its bills. Over its long working life Irish performers remained a mainstay of its programmes, the artists' genres and billing soubriquets altering remarkably little over the period from 1860 to 1914.

By the 1880s the Britannia was at the centre of an Irish performing sub-culture. Although Irish acts never constituted a majority of turns, star Irish comedians were particularly popular as headline attractions. The full range of Irish genres – from dancers, vocalists and duettists to 'low' or knock-about comedy—is demonstrated by the list of Irish performers that appeared at the hall in the course of a single year, 1885 (Table 3.1). Other Irish comedians associated with the Britannia in the same period included 'Ireland's Gem', Patrick Rooney, Patrick Feeney, 'The Irish Ambassador', and 'The Man That Came Over From Ireland', Pat Connor and Pat Rafferty.

Table 3.1   Irish Performers at the Britannia Music Hall, 1885

Dermot & Doyle, *Irish knockabout comedians and dancers*
Ted Grattan, *Irish comedy*
Cheevers & Kennedy, *Irish, Negro and Dutch characters*
The Donnells, James and Kate, *English and Irish duettists*
'Count' George Pearson
The Two Macs, *Eccentric Irish Knock-about Act*
Brothers Golding *Dutch and Irish business*
Patsy Harvey, *Clever eccentric Irish comedian and dancer*
Paddy and Ella Murphy, *Genuine Irish Duettists and Dancers*
Kearns and Kasey, *Irish duettists*
Sam Jones, *Acrobatic Dancing and Irish Songs*
Tom Macrorey, *Irish Character business*
Messrs Folloy & O'Neil, *Impersonations of Irish Life & Character*
P.W. O'Brien, *Irish low comedy*
Walter Munroe, *Great star Hibernian entertainer*
W.J. Ashcroft, *The Solid Man*
Messrs Lally & Doyle, *The Men Who Erected the City*
Brothers Stannard, *Hibernian Songs and dances*
Elliot & Renson, *Irish Character Duettists and Dancers*
Mr Dan Leno, *Irish Comedian and Prize dancer*

Source: The Professional

The provision of such acts clearly represented a market-driven response to audience demand. So 'Count' George Pearson first appeared at the Britannia in 1879, but made his 'breakthrough' there in 1883 singing 'Tyrone amongst the Bushes', and proved so popular that he was annually re-engaged at an increased fee. Leading stars were similarly booked for their drawing power: news of W.J. Ashcroft's 1885 engagement at the Britannia was trailed in the press a full eight months before his appearance.

The search for new attractions was clearly a major preoccupation for the Britannia's management, who were known for 'importing large numbers of "directs" from America', as well as 'Bowery Boys from Liverpool, and American teams from as far as the Hatter's Brae, Cowcaddens'. Press items and biographies in music hall trade journals, and first-hand recollections of this period, the 1880s, all confirm that the management style of the time was aggressively entrepreneurial and highly opportunistic in locating and capitalising on its stars. An example involved the 'Two Macs', subsequently popular headliners, who initially came over from Dublin to play in Coatbridge. Hearing of their success, Rossborough booked them for the Britannia, but initially chose not to print any bills for their first week. When they proved enormously popular, 'The next week's bills came out with the Two Macs on the top "Re-engaged Regardless of Expense"'.

The Irish influence seems to have permeated all levels of the hall's management and professional culture through a network of ties and associations. Rossborough, the proprietor, was born in America, and seems to have come from an Irish-American background; his wife was the widow of the Irish comic Paddy McGowan, and his step-son, Alex McGowan, subsequently became acting manager. The 1881 census also shows the household had an Irish girl as a domestic servant.

If the popularity of these Irish performers then was undeniable, both with partisan immigrant audiences at the Britannia, and with the wider Glasgow music hall public, the question remains as to quite where their attraction lay for these different constituencies, and why Irish acts remained popular—and, on some level, resonant—for so long?

Part of the answer involves establishing the Irish community's own relationship to the stage Irishman, in other words, unpacking Handley's assertion that the figure was intended for the delectation of 'native' audiences. In this respect, dismissals of the stage Irish character by literary critics fail to provide a convincing motive for the figure's patronage by the expatriate Irish. Declan Kiberd suggests that, for

those Irish who chose to play up to the stage image in their dealings
with the English:

> the stereotype had indeed certain short-lived advantages. It permitted some
> form of elementary contact between the immigrant and the native English;
> but it necessitated only a circumscribed relationship, which the Irish could
> control and regulate at will.

As a result, many immigrants perfected 'an art of fawning duplicity'.[20] But
even if, as Kiberd asserts, 'it suited the Irish in Britain, and possibly even
in America to conform to the prototype', the suggestion he quotes that
'the caricature and ridicule meant that the English considered them harm-
less creatures' seems a very broad generalisation.[21] A more psychologically
complex reading, which allows for a more knowing degree of Irish agency,
comes from Richard Allen Cave:

> One might argue that the strategy of the overt assumption of the role of
> Stage Irishman was designed to convey the impression that the Irish, inured
> to the insult implicit in the stereotype, had begun to act in the manner
> expected of them by the English as a deliberate, even political, ploy to keep
> hidden and protected the true spirit of the nation, so that the last laugh was
> on the English for being short-sighted and insensitive in perceiving egocen-
> trically only what they chose to see.[22]

These readings make several important assumptions about the Irish stage
character: that it exerted a literal, performative influence on the immigrant
community; that in conception and impact it was directed at the English;
and that Irish audiences (even if they manipulated it to their advantage),
were essentially passive recipients—rather than formers—of the depiction.
In fact all these factors are questionable, and, at least in the different con-
texts that we are examining—in Scotland, and in music hall—the Irish
stage figure was, like its Scottish equivalent, the Scotch comic, a consider-
ably more complex phenomenon.

   In contrast, the Irish figure (or figures) fulfilled two important func-
tions, one of which related to the Irish in Scotland, and the other to the
wider Irish world. The first was that, through songs and performing mate-
rial, Irish stage characters helped adapt the immigrant Irish community to
the process of urbanisation in Scotland by shifting the focus of Irish char-
acterisations from rural to urban contexts that better reflected their new
circumstances. And second, they provided a unifying version of national
identity, such as was required by reductive popular theatre formats, that

linked Irish communities in British cities like Glasgow to those in North America and the wider Irish diaspora.

THE IRISH IN SCOTLAND

Examining the first of these, the figure's significance to the Irish in Scotland, the key focus lies in the performing material, which broadened the range of the stage Irish persona to include increasing references to urban subjects and immigrant experience. In music hall, the Irish stage persona was projected through a wide and continually up-dated repertoire of songs, available in Glasgow-published collections such as Barr's *Irish Songster* (1880s) and *Shamrock Songster* (c.1901). This material broadly consisted of two streams: sentimental songs and ballads revolving around love of family and homeland ('Erin'); and comic sketches, songs and patter. The tone of the sentimentalised material remained remarkably consistent over a long period, the emotive iconography of green hills, silver-haired mothers and dark-eyed colleens remaining virtually unchanged from the 1860s to the 1920s.[23]

However, other Irish music hall idioms offered a marked broadening of the themes. So while comic songs continued to celebrate the 'Irish' characteristics familiar from popular dramas—laziness, drinking, the propensity for violence through the ubiquitous 'Donnybrook' and so on—they also often featured references to Glasgow life and locations that marked them out as distinct products of the urban Irish experience. In drawing on familiar city locations and circumstances of immigrant experience, they therefore set their Irish characters firmly in the Glasgow landscape.

While fighting remained a characteristic theme, other songs gained their comic effect by pointing up the disparity between the swaggering, posturing tone of Irish men about town and the underlying social reality of their place in society. In C.R. Armstrong's 'Dungannon', based on a real-life Glasgow character, the self-styled 'bould boss of the Bazaar', likes 'a taste of whiskey / Just a small drop in a jar'. But at the song's end confirmation, if any is needed, of the 'boss's' true threadbare status comes when he goes to meet his sweetheart, 'Connaught Mary Ann',

> as fine a girl as you would meet from here to Castlebar,
> An' she always goes in her barefeet
> Like the Boss of the Bazaar.[24]

Dungannon reappears in another song, 'Donnelly's Hotel', about a lodging house at Bridgeton Cross, where he forms part of the gallery of

inmates, along with 'Kelly, that loafs about the toll', 'all the fancy men, and the boys that humphs the coal':

> And there is big Dungannon, he thinks that he's a swell,
> He gets his doss for nothing down in Donnelly's Hotel.

In 'The Terror of the Briggate', the bullish claims of the self-regarding protagonist, Mick, to be pugilistic 'cock of the walk' are similarly shot down by the clumsiness of his confused attempts at social aggrandisement, and by a series of references to his social milieu.

> Ye see a man before ye that has gained great respect,
> The reason is I make myself so free,
> An' to occupation, shure, I am an architect,
> Yis, at carrying the hod there's none bates me.[25]

Among other details that further telegraph the joke and firmly place him in his Glasgow milieu, are that Mick 'resides' in Jaffrey's Close, off Stockwell Street ('an' that's where I was born, You'll see my name placed on the door wid chalk'), and frequents 'Dobbin's in Saltmarket' where 'shure all us gintry goes, It's good enough to get stuff there on tick.' While we don't dispute Mick's claim to be the top fighting man of the locality, his muddled pretensions to gentlemanly status, emphasised by the richness of the brogue, reinforce the image of the Irishman as cocksure, vain, and, above all, insensitive to the ridicule of others.

If the joke here is at the expense of self-importance, and getting above oneself, then such thick-skinned Irish gaucheness, translated in these songs as an inability to see oneself as others do, also had the potential for sympathetic portrayal. The protagonist of 'The Girl That Was Dressed Like a Fairy', also by the Glasgow songwriter Armstrong, describes how, on visiting the Theatre Royal ('the Royal Theatre') he is besotted by one of the dancing girls. Catching her eye, he winks 'in the rale ould Irish fashion', to the mirth of those around him, and adding to the hail of bouquets raining onto the stage, throws 'a small one from my coat'.

> For that people at me kept sneerin',
> But a short note inside it I wrote,
> Sayin', Meet me when you're done appearin'.

Encountering the girl after the show, he accompanies her back to her digs, 'a self-contained mansion about seven flights of stairs up, oh, it was quite

a heavenly abode', where they enjoy 'a grand dramatic conversation'. As in the previous songs, the humour is at the expense of the gauche Mick, who is subsequently clearly taken advantage of by his chorus girl ('Oh, begorra, I plase this girl rightly, The people says there's Mick the pro., For I carry her luggage home nightly.') However, the character's naivety, and sense of being both 'of' the big city, and yet out of place in it, has a charm that translates, at least at one point, into genuine lyricism: after their first meeting, the love—and stage-struck Mick confesses in patter how 'that night when I got home I dreamt I had a second-hand pair of wings on me, an' was flyin' about the Saltmarket lookin' out for my darlin' fairy'.[26]

Such imaginative flights of fancy—from the mouth of a rough-cast 'cratur' in a music hall song of the late 1880s —were not uncharacteristic. Declan Kiberd, among others, has seen the original stage Irishman as a product of English Protestantism's need for 'a foil which might set off the domestic [English] virtues of efficiency, order and reason', noting that, as the price for this 'the feeling for poetry and emotion was projected onto the native'.[27] Notwithstanding the continued (irresistible) attraction of boozing and brawling as comic subjects, Irish music hall acts helped promote the increasing association of 'Irish' with good-humoured loquaciousness and wit, through verbal dexterity, 'blarney' and cross-talk. An element of whimsy or fantasy—the 'poetry and emotion' that Kiberd refers to—remained a licensed characteristic of Irish acts.

If the Irish are then increasingly part of urban society, some Irish comic songs reflected this by focussing on what could be seen as more universal themes: the perennial problem of what to do with lazy sons, as in 'Barney Wrought in Dixon's', where the second offspring was a 'holder on / In Elder's big ship yard', (a Clyde shipbuilders), before being sacked and 'running with the mob'; a man worried about his wife drinking with the lodger ('Doing Doctor Tanner'); and the sexual harassment and domestic abuse faced by Irish women.[28] Although the exposition of these latter subjects was constrained by the comic idiom, and by their performance by male comedians, they nevertheless reflected genuine critiques of Irish masculinity in a number of domestic situations: 'Is it because I'm Irish!' concerns a girl's problem in keeping her boyfriend, Barney, from confusing her 'shyness' with consent to his sexual advances; in 'Oh, Mr Murphy!' a young woman is forced to fend off the unwelcome attentions of a former boyfriend, a butcher, who won't give up even though she is now married ('Last night as I was passing he bawled out in the street / "Step inside, Mrs Casey, and inspect this joint of meat."')[29]; and in 'Mistress O'Hooligan's Son', the protagonist rues the day she ever listened to the

eponymous dame, and agreed to marry her son, who turned out to be an abusive monster:

> For he is a notorious rascal, a day's
> work he never would do,
> But come home at night, and provoke me to fight,
> then batter my face black and blue.[30]

If these songs all show a normalisation of themes, of characters depicted in a wider range of urban social contexts, a further indication of growing confidence lay in the emergence of Irish songs with a political or radicalising message. The 'patriotic Irish comedian' Pat Rooney's 'I will always speak of Old Ireland with Pride', and 'Ireland Once More Will Arise from the Dust', ('sung with immense success at the Britannia Music Hall, Glasgow') were typical products of the 1880s. In these, the writers and performers observed music hall conventions regarding politically divisive material: so songs were designated 'patriotic' rather than 'nationalist', for the more positive/ambivalent aspect this lent them, and were careful to proceed from a position of historic loyalty—first emphasising Irish blood shed in England's past defence—and to argue for political reform on reasoned grounds of fairness and natural justice. On these terms calls for reform/self rule could be characterised as a reversal of previous injustice, and, rather than a dangerous precedent, be portrayed as simply restoring the equilibrium of natural, harmonious good relations with the mother country. (In other words, for those in the audience who weren't listening too closely, it could seem as if the singer wanted home-rule for Ireland to secure the future of the Empire.)

Concern that Irish politics could have an incendiary effect on audiences was shared by legitimate theatre managements. A press advertisement for '*Home Rule, or Ireland for the Irish*', at Glasgow's Royal Princess's Theatre in 1880 carried a disclaimer that the play 'has no political or religious tendency, and is simply a *resume* of scenes and incidents depicting the present condition of the Irish tenant farmer'. However in music hall, performers could, given a suitably 'patriotic' delivery, use such songs to deliver a developed political critique. Pat Rooney's 'Ireland Once More Will Arise from the Dust' went beyond a straightforward plea for Home Rule to touch on both the demographic problems caused by Ireland's population drain, and the need for a wider range of economic measures:

> A justful law to deal with land,
> Erin can claim at last,

But to make Ireland prosperous,
A few more should be passed;
With trade and commerce as of yore,
It quickly would be shown,
That Irish manufactures,
Can always hold their own.[31]

Pat Feeney, the pre-eminent Irish political vocalist in this vein, was regarded as a champion of nationalist sentiment. Although his repertoire included its share of heavily sentimentalised material, he was also on a personal level passionately engaged with the community and its struggles, and was remembered as 'really a patriot off the stage as well as on [who] on more than one occasion of famine and other causes of unemployment in his native land … collected for sundry charity funds for the relief of his distressed compatriots'.[32]

The collective effect of this body of music hall songs was to broaden the range of associations and possibilities of Irish stage characters. No longer limited to stock types familiar from rural dramas, they now included a new set of hybridised figures and situations that unmistakably belonged to the urban landscape in which they were performed: the swell, self-important 'fighting man', the honest Irish workman whose observations on city life reveal him as an innocent abroad, and a range of characters rooted in the physical and material circumstances of immigrant life in Scotland; familiar Irish 'characters', no longer pretending to be in a mythical rural Ireland, but as encountered in the streets of Glasgow.

The fact that these songs were about life in urban Scotland also has important implications for our view of the function of these music hall representations. As I have suggested, previous criticism of the 'legitimate' stage Irishman has characterised the figure as a projection of English colonial 'Otherness', in Kiberd's words, 'a foil which might set off the [English] domestic virtues of efficiency, order and reason'.[33] This analysis, largely based on the work of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish dramatists, has also tended to be rather casually ascribed to the character's music hall version. (Kiberd points up the disparity in the attitude of English audiences towards the Irish by which 'the music-hall creation was loved and the real-life model hated', but suggests their affection for Irish protagonists was 'a classic example of the tendency of all repressive regimes to sentimentalise their victims'.[34])

However, from a Scottish perspective, this reading is mistaken on two counts: first, that the connotation of Irish stage representations in the English milieu, the accepted default for most of these studies, was

substantially different from that applying in Scotland, where the territory was much more complex (being simultaneously both more religiously hostile and culturally receptive); and, second, that music hall's taking up and development of the Stage Irish character should be viewed and judged by a quite different standard to that applying to 'literary' theatre. In this, I believe that we get a completely different view of the stage Irish figure when it is set aside the other reductive ethnic and national stereotypes with which music hall was populated.

The key lies in the functioning of music hall itself. Kiberd views the Stage Irish persona as a caricature, in which immigrants to England (and America) acquiesced because it suited their need for a prototype at a time when, coming from rural backgrounds, they had no ready-made urban identity. But this view of a persona squarely intended for English audiences (which even Handley, for quite different reasons, is quite happy to fall back on) does not correspond to our experience of Glasgow. As we have seen, at the Britannia in the 1880s large numbers of 'Irish' performers sang Irish songs to audiences likely to contain a high proportion of immigrants or those of Irish extraction. Notwithstanding their exaggerated comic idiom, at least part of their performing material reflected immigrant experience through references to Glasgow locations and the day to day experiences and situations of immigrant life. The introduction of these local references might possibly be put down to detail—to colour furnished to add verisimilitude—were it not for the fact that the presence of political and national content in songs also suggests an Irish consciousness and political aspirations at work within the format.[35]

The vibrancy of this performing tradition suggests that Glasgow Irish audiences, rather than finding it, in Kiberd's words, 'easier to don the mask of the surrogate Irishman than to reshape a complex urban identity of their own', were in fact doing precisely the latter: that these comic songs located in Glasgow, and featuring titles such as 'No Irish Need Apply', were both celebrating Irish figures on the Scottish scene, and staking a claim for their rights, both in Scotland and, through campaigning for political self-determination and Home Rule, in Ireland.

Reframed in these terms, the Irish music hall character seems less a response to Scottish or British—and let alone English—imaginings, than an expression of identity at least partly engendered by the demands of diaspora. This factor—the role of the character as a transmitter of national cultural identity between the centres of diaspora—is one that I identified earlier, and will now explore.

Diaspora

Glasgow was a key British centre of the Irish diaspora. As a major port and industrial centre, the city acted as a conduit or clearing house for Irish immigrants passing through in a number of different directions: to and from Ireland, via Dublin and Belfast; within Britain, to the other major Irish communities in London, Liverpool and Birmingham; and, beyond this, to the American centres of Boston and New York.

Besides this role as a gateway, Glasgow's own shifting Irish population, both established and transient, kept in close touch with the mother country through an extensive and self-renewing network of contacts—familial, commercial and cultural—made possible by its proximity to Ireland and the ease of sea travel. These links also provided contact with musical and cultural developments in Ireland. As a result, Irish actor managers regularly brought companies to Glasgow and Clydebank for seasons of Irish dramas. And from the 1870s Glasgow was part of what developed into an established pattern of theatrical touring that saw productions play in a circuit that comprised Glasgow, Belfast, Dublin, Cork and Liverpool.[36]

If Glasgow's Irish communities remained connected to cultural influences from Ireland, they also conspicuously embraced music hall, which featured in social events promoted by Glasgow Irish organisations. St Patrick's Night celebrations in the 1880s, usually presided over by a priest, featured Irish music hall songs as well as traditional music. The Irish National League's weekly concerts, designed to provide affordable winter entertainment for working people, also featured songs from the halls. At one packed event in the Gallowgate, arrangements clearly reflected rural Irish protocols, with 'The ladies […] placed on one side, and the gentlemen on the other; of course there was a guard between them, still the boys kept winking over to the colleens, and the colleens winked back in return.'[37] But for all this social conservatism, the entertainment provided by the amateur performers present included 'Where the grass grows green', 'Those words are engraved on an Irishman's heart', and 'Homeward once more'. The inclusion of such songs, typical of nostalgic music-hall balladry, at community events did not represent an imposition by external, commercial pressures, but rather the genuine emotive resonance such material could have for expatriate audiences.

If the Irish community identified with music hall, the careers of many performers were also closely bound up with the experience of diaspora.

For example, most of the Britannia's star comedians of the 1880s previously discussed were not born in Ireland but came from backgrounds in Irish communities in Britain: Pat Rooney was from Bolton, George Pearson came from Liverpool, and Pat Connor began his career as a boy in Bradford and Leeds. Pat Feeney was born in Birmingham. Walter Munro was Irish-born but grew up in Liverpool.

These performers' approach to Irish identity was, like that of many in the audiences to which they performed, conditioned by their experience as immigrants in British cities, and of what it meant to grow up as part of a contentious minority in an often hostile host society. Striving to develop careers in Britain, they faced choices as to the degree to which they chose to be professionally defined by their Irish identity, a situation which amounted to a trade-off between the socio-economic price of acknowledging ethnic extraction and, in the right situation, capitalising on its professional utility.

Perhaps as a result of their shared experiences, Irish performers became closely identified with the Irish community in Britain, and with the promotion of Irish political consciousness. The outstanding figure in this respect in the 1870s and 1880s was the 'patriotic' Irish comedian Patrick Feeney, who used his act as a focus for political material, and whose death in London in 1889 at the age of forty-eight provoked an enormous outpouring (Fig. 3.1). A tribute in a Glasgow music hall paper, printed alongside a notably sober and statesmanlike portrait of the performer, stated of his activism:

> Pat was a most enthusiastic Home Ruler; in the days when Home Rule found more bricks than sympathy in the music halls, Pat used never to miss an opportunity of advocating the claims of his race. It was his boast that he was largely responsible for the changed feeling that has come in latter days.[38]

Glasgow's own iconic Irish star was Marie Loftus, reputedly born in Stockwell Street in 1857 of Glasgow Irish parents, although the fact of her Irish background was, in professional terms, much more locally and selectively deployed. Loftus, who made her first appearances as a girl dancing at the Scotia music hall, went on to become one of the transcendent female stars of the Victorian music hall, appearing in Drury Lane pantomimes and touring South Africa and the United States. Although early in her career she sang songs like 'Kilkenny Kate' and was billed as 'The

Fig. 3.1 Patrick Feeney, Irish comedian. *The Professional*, 18 May 1889. (© CSG CIC Glasgow Museums and Libraries Collections)

Hibernian Hebe', she quickly developed into a skilled Serio Comedienne, who specialised in delivering pastiches of a wide range of different performers and song genres. There is no evidence to suggest that, in her mature incarnation as 'The Sarah Bernhardt of the music halls', Loftus made a particular feature of Irish material, or was known as being of Irish extraction by wider British audiences. But on her regular triumphant returns to her home city her Glasgow Irish background was a key part of her appeal. At a tribute concert to raise funds for Feeney's mother and daughter held at the City Hall under the auspices of the Irish National League, one of several such events nationally, it was reported that, among the long list of contributing Glasgow performers, which included Miss Maud Bruce singing 'Killarney', and Mr Orr Leslie with 'The Irish Emigrant', 'Miss Marie

Loftus was the favourite, her appearance alone brought forth rounds of deafening applause.'[39] She subsequently attended an INL meeting to contribute £1 to branch funds.

If these 'Irish' performers were products of the British Irish diaspora, its other key dimension and export market was North American. Just as Boucicault's Irish dramas had been conceived and written for the American market, so Irish-American influences fed back into British music hall through the exchange of performers, songs and performance styles. The diasporic backgrounds of Irish-American performers often mirrored those of their British colleagues. British stars like Loftus, 'Our Mollie', and Nelly Farrell, the 'Glittering Star of Erin', found their North American equivalents in the New York-based singer and jig dancer Kitty O'Neil, and Massachusetts-born Maggie Cline, the 'Irish Queen' of Tony Pastor's Bowery Theatre, whose riotous songs included 'When Hogan Pays the Rent' and 'Throw him down, McCloskey'.[40] While Irish acts were the most popular of vaudeville's gallery of ethnic genres, the continual development of new permutations of Irish-American performing styles—from knockabout Irish 'doubles' to dancing and pattering family acts, sentimental warring couples, and four acts like 'The Four Cohans'—also relied on synthesising elements from incoming performers from Ireland and Britain. In fact the adaptation of traditional Irish step-dancing and jigs that, alongside often brutal knockabout comedy, became the characteristic tropes of American-Irish acts (to the extent that one commentator suggests that 'In vaudeville, to be Irish was to dance') derived much of their theatrical impact from their crossing with a British-derived tradition—the steel-shod clog dancing that had originated in the north of England, and was hugely popular in working-class halls like the Britannia.[41]

Among British centres, Glasgow was a net exporter of talented 'Irish' performers, being, as an 1880s report put it, 'famed all over the country for many years back of sending out some of the best Irish comedians in the music hall line'.[42] Many of the most successful went to try their luck across the 'Herring Pond' in America and further afield. These included such Britannia favourites as The Donnells, Folloy and O'Neil (who made 'many long and successful tours in America, Australia and the Continent'), Cairns and Conway, The Brothers Wilkinson, and Palles and Cusick.

In return, imported Irish-American performers continually arrived to refresh and develop performance styles in Glasgow. An example was W.J. Ashcroft, who, at his début performance at the Britannia in the early 1880s, sensationally overturned the previous Irish comic fashion for

knee breeches, shillelaghs and dancing in 'Irish jig time', by appearing in whiskers, tall hat and trousers to deliver his song 'Muldoon, the Solid Man'. An eyewitness described how the Britannia audience was at first bemused, until, at the end of the first chorus, Ashcroft 'turned his head over his shoulder and said, "Ah, ah, bhoys, I'll soon get a grip of ye"', and started to dance. In the storming performance that followed, the audience 'wouldn't let him away'. Ashcroft held the stage for an hour and twenty minutes, while '"Muldoon the Solid Man" became the rage and was sung everywhere'.[43] The song had originally been the signature of the leading Irish-American double-act, Harrigan and Hart. Its extended life in Britain and Ireland with Ashcroft, who built a considerable career based around the song and character, demonstrates the close interrelationship between these parallel performing worlds.[44] Such transatlantic careers could even come full circle. Diamond and Ryan were 'two Glasgow boys that went over to America … and created quite a sensation as Irish duettists all over the States'. After Diamond died young and was replaced by an American, the succeeding act, Kelly and Ryan, 'great Irish comedians, and double dancers', returned via England to play in Glasgow in 1887.

A result of this national and international market for genre performers was that, as a marketable commodity, the 'Irish' persona was open to anyone who could realise it. For performers, the Irish comedian was, like the Scotch comic and blackface minstrel, one of a number of interchangeable characterisations that could be taken up and used for as long as was professionally advantageous. So the Glasgow comedian W.H. Lannaghan, like Harry Lauder, began his career as an Irish comedian before, 'seeing an opening in the Scotch line'. (Over time, switching between Irish and Scottish repertoires within the same act became a common music-hall trope, sometimes used for virtuosic effect, as when the juvenile 'Little Mackenzie danced the Highland Fling in the national costume, and afterwards, in the attire of a Son of Erin, danced a jig, to the satisfaction of all.')[45]

The development of the stage Irish figure in such a formalised context produces a number of issues of commodification and cultural appropriation associated with mass culture. One concerned the question of authenticity, and the extent to which it could be commodified. An example concerns Walter Munro, the 'Great Star Hibernian Entertainer', who began his career in Liverpool halls, and made his breakthrough in Glasgow in 1881, when he 'scored […] a terrific success' with a clutch of songs that included the previously discussed 'Girl that was Dressed like a Fairy', 'The Terror of

the Briggate', and, above all, 'his wonderful life-like impersonation of that well-known local character called "Dungannon"'.[46] As we have seen, these songs, all 'written expressly for him by C.R. Armstrong of Glasgow', drew on local references and situations, including the real-life 'Dungannon', in a way that was calculated to appeal to Glasgow audiences. Munro's astuteness in commissioning them from one of Glasgow's top songwriters for his engagement in the city evidently paid dividends. The songs also nicely encapsulate the problems of authenticity and appropriation. Were these apparently Glaswegian Irish numbers less authentic because they were not sung by a 'native' Irish comedian—i.e., one from Glasgow? Or was their resonance for the audience largely the same, because Munro himself was from an immigrant background? In other words, were the songs much more about diaspora?

While the local setting was explicit in the songs' lyrics and setting, the audience's identification was as much with the performer's diasporic credentials: music hall was professionally cosmopolitan, and, for the songs' purposes, being Irish was more important than being Glasgow Irish. Although Shaw's 1904 satire *John Bull's Other Island* made great play of the fraudulence of what Cave describes as 'a Glaswegian doing a stage-Irish turn', a point had surely been missed: for all the play's blunt demarcation that, as Ben Levitas put it, Shaw's character Haffigan, 'born in Glasgow, howsoever of Irish extraction, however Irish he might appear, is not Irish', the opposite was clearly the case for Irish audiences in Britain; certainly in Glasgow the resonance of such performers was in no way lessened by their being from Glasgow—or Birmingham, Bolton or Liverpool—and in many cases was probably enhanced by being rooted in the experience of immigrant Irish audiences.[47]

A comparison might be with the different implications such diasporic Irish performances may have had for audiences and performers in America. As in Britain, American writers have noted the development of the stage Irishman in vaudeville, similarly suggesting that a key aspect—the updating of the original Irish comic figure to reflect its new urban contexts—was about reflecting socio-economic changes brought about by emigration to the US, and the social progress that followed its initial rural phase. For Robert Snyder this meant that 'reflecting reality, the stage Irishman evolved from a hod-carrying labourer to a politician or a contractor and eventually an urban man about town'.[48] As a result 'In vaudeville, Irish performers created a style that was both urban and ethnic—a testimony to their passage from being rural immigrants to being at home in American

cities', a response that seems very similar to the broadening of Irish song and performance styles seen in Scottish contexts.[49] As I will discuss in the next chapter, one function of ethnic acts in vaudeville is widely seen as being broadly educative, about introducing urban ethnic communities to one another. But while another involved giving the community being depicted—in this case, the Irish—a popular representation which could serve as a focus for the celebration of patriotic pride and national culture, the chauvinism of such swaggering ethnic representations also had limitations that belied an underlying truth: that for all their emotive power, they were to be experienced as part of a new national context. As William H.A. Williams has written of the multiple meanings of these Irish performances, for all the fervour of performers like Maggie Cline, Tony Pastor's 'Irish Queen', 'reality for her, for everyone in her audience, Irish and non-Irish, was out there in the streets of New York, not on some Emerald Isle of the Imagination'.[50]

> It was as if the performer said to the audience: 'This sentimental song we just sang about Ireland may bring tears to your eyes. But while the tears are real, the Ireland I sang about is not.'[51]

If this marked both the appeal and limitations of such diasporic acts, a distinction between Irish audiences in America and Scotland might have involved the extent of the commitment to the host society involved. When Williams' metaphorical performer tells his Irish audience 'We sing these songs and tell these stories because we are in America, and because we are a certain kind of American', this presumed a forward-looking commitment to a new start in a still-developing society in which everything was possible. In contrast, for Irish immigrants to Britain, who were joining a society with not only a long history of enmity towards Ireland and the Irish, but which, in the case of Scotland and Glasgow, was divided by historic sectarian disputes, and where they were likely to face discrimination in employment, housing and education, expectations of the new life ahead were likely to be lower and much more rooted in short-term economic pragmatism. In these instances, with much more limited expectations of the host society, might the retention and sustaining of diaspora as an imaginative refuge and cornerstone of cultural identity have been—paradoxically—more significant to Irish communities in Scotland? Or would the root to assimilation lie through identification with regional or local West

of Scotland—meaning Glaswegian—working-class culture, rather than with notional allegiances to Britain or Scotland?

The Irish stage genre was also an example of the economic exploitation of cultural capital. In this it parallels debates surrounding nineteenth century Scottish popular culture discussed earlier. Just as the technological innovation of an affordable popular press allowed the Kailyard authors to take advantage of the new market for cheap fiction, so the Irish stage figure, at least in this latter phase, must be seen as part of the same movement. As John Harrington has written of the relations between the Irish and English theatres, 'at least part of the story is about the fortunes of Irish literature as export'.[52]

The paradox of such exported national cultures was that even as they were being taken up abroad, the same economic and technological pressures which brought about the impulse for large-scale population movements were also leading towards increasing cultural cosmopolitanism. Christopher Morash has observed of Ireland in the 1870s, at a time when much the same process was also occurring in Scotland, that 'in the same years that Irish culture was becoming more self-consciously national, the new rail and steamship routes and the growth of English and American touring companies were making Ireland a part of a theatre world that was increasingly multi-national'.[53] These latter observations serve to locate the stage Irishman—and woman—and their associated music hall genres within wider movements involving the place of national cultures and imagery in the age of mass production.

In these respects, music hall seems to have offered greater opportunities for the development of Irish stage representations than was often the case in Irish dramas. Ruth Forbes suggests that, in the development of cultural identity in the industrial age, 'historical continuity was also apparent in the transportation of the tropes of rural and early industrial society to the larger industrial urban environment'. She cites as an example the way that the adaptation of conventions and imagery from rural ballads to nineteenth century urban settings resulted in 'the transfiguration of shepherdess to factory girl', as the latter figure emerged as a recurring motif in songs and poems from Glasgow, Dundee and industrial cities in the north of England.[54] I suggest that, in transposing themselves to new media and forms, familiar figures from Irish female iconography, touching down in the more egalitarian environs of urban music hall, similarly found opportunities to shed some of the constraints of Irish domestic drama,

where female stereotypes had been denied the opportunities for revision accorded to the stage Irishman.[55]

Several writers have described English star Jenny Hill's empowering and subversive performances burlesquing Boucicault's male characters.[56] However in the 1870s the Britannia provided the 'celebrated Irish comedienne, Miss Hussy St. George, the great male impersonator', who in her song 'The Big Ship That First Brought Me Forth', 'dressed as the old-style Irish comedian with knee breeches and shillelagh. She could sing, talk and dance and was a very creditable performer indeed.'[57] Billed as 'The Female Irishman', St. George seems not, like Hill, to have been offering a one-off satirical sketch to knowing metropolitan audiences, but something different: a dedicated impersonation of male Irish comedians, whose swaggering mannerisms were only too familiar to Glasgow audiences. A contrasting model of female Irish performer was Nelly Farrell, 'the Glittering Star of Erin', who combined the emotive, expatriate appeal of songs like 'Some May Love the Land of the Thistle: or, My Heart's Away in Ireland' with a formidably assertive femininity which enabled her to win over disruptive male audiences of 'Trongate Mashers' at rough halls like the Star, Watson Street.[58] (At the Gaiety, it was reported 'she 'fairly "kills" the Masherites, with her dashing and voracious manner.') In renegotiating the presentation of Irish idioms, both performers seem in different ways to have offered wider audiences what Cave terms 'a woman's impression of the Irish predicament, a championing of a recognisably celtic sensibility as obviously Other and *alternative* but acceptable on its own merits'.[59]

In some instances, the process of the transposition of figures from Irish female iconography to music hall was also being replicated on other levels by artistic and literary society. So 'Mary Connolly, the Great Irish Soprano, found in the streets of Dublin',[60] one of a number of such singing waif acts, who appeared on the bill at Glasgow Empire in 1918, offered a sort of popular theatre corollary to the aesthetic vogue for paintings of 'Irish Girl' subjects by late nineteenth-century artists such as Ford Madox Ford, James McNeill Whistler, James Tissot and the Irish-born John Lavery (who had slept rough on Glasgow Green as a teenager).[61] A well-established vein of music hall songs similarly represented an idealised depiction of the colleen and her more spirited, less chaste cousin, the Irish barmaid. (Reflecting this, Marie Loftus's billing in Ireland as the 'Hibernian Hebe' probably related to a fashionable classical allusion by which vivacious barmaids like those who staffed the bars at Dan Lowrey's Dublin music hall were referred to as 'Hebes' after the Greek goddesses of youth and beauty.[62])

These representations had their utility. At a time when middle class intellectual circles were disparaging Irish popular culture, music hall and popular theatre offered a forum for the accommodation of traditional forms and representations. So a press report of a 1907 Scottish Society of Literature and Arts lecture on 'Irish Fairy Tales and Song', given before 'a hard-headed, matter of fact Glasgow audience', could condescendingly dismiss the lady lecturer's subject as dealing with the 'to Scotch minds, failings of her countrymen'. However, it was in precisely what the report conceded to be the fruits of these 'failings'—'simplicity of nature and sincerity of feeling'—that variety and popular theatre dealt. Ironically, given music hall's associations with modernity and the pressure of the market, it was these popular theatre forms which offered channels by which older traditional and popular entertainments could by-pass critical constraints to restate their uncomplicated appeal in new urban circumstances. So Chalmers Mackey could present 'Rollicking Rory', billed as 'a new romantic Irish fairy play', at Glasgow's Grand Theatre in 1913.[63]

To conclude, music hall performers in Glasgow adapted Irish stage representations to reflect the experience and circumstances of immigrant life in urban Scotland. Their songs and performing material, while retaining their distinct Irish character and idioms, subtly and selectively transposed Irish characters to this new urban context (in much the same way as the evolving repertoires of Irish acts in North America saw them 'creat[e] a style that was both urban and ethnic—a testimony to their passage from being rural immigrants to being at home in American cities'[64]). However, an important part of the Irish stage characters' continuing appeal to immigrant audiences lay in their simultaneous resonance as a representation of Irish identity shared with Irish communities in other parts of the UK and the United States. For Glasgow Irish audiences, the continuing resonance of these often simplistically-drawn characterisations lay in the fact that they also represented a shared, transferable image of national identity. Evidence of this lay in the fact that between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Irish performers and acts continually circulated between Glasgow and America centres, exchanging songs and performing material, and introducing new fashions and styles of performance. The process of exchange provided for refreshment and renewal of such Irish representations.

Recalling the start of this chapter, and earlier discussion of Benedict Anderson's ideas, the question arises of whether this willed aspiration to a shared diasporic identity projected through the stage Irish figure might, in this expatriate context, constitute an 'imagined community' in Anderson's

terms?[65] In a recent essay exploring the notion from the perspective of Yeats' Irish Literary Theatre and the genesis of the Abbey, Chris Morash has concluded emphatically not. Considering Anderson's claims for the relationship between 'print capitalism' and the formation of a sense of national consciousness, vested in the 'mass ceremony' of the opening of the morning paper, Morash asserts that, in the case of theatre as performance, 'none of Anderson's arguments apply': far from meeting the criteria for a mass medium, a theatre performance is restricted to a specific time and place; the audience is not imagined but real, and limited to those present; and each production—arguably each performance—is distinct and different. Moreover, he suggests that, in its physical presence, for the audience the experience of watching a play is less like belonging to a *national* community, than to a *local* one (his italics). However Morash does concede that one of the key limitations to replicating 'the experience of shared national communion that Anderson identifies in the newspaper'—that a theatrical performance can only take place at one location—could be partially addressed by the touring of productions, as in the case of the Abbey:

> The audiences in Cork or Galway who watched a play that had been staged in Dublin, it could be argued, were sharing a cultural experience, *albeit* not simultaneously. Such an audience, it could be argued, was transformed from a local community, to become part of a wider national community that is both imagined and real, existing in imaginary communion with other audiences elsewhere in the national space, and simultaneously in real communion with other members of the national audience present in the theatre.[66]

In this context, though, with the possibility of simultaneous or multiple performances, could music hall representations not come much closer to meeting Anderson's criteria? The stage Irish figure featured in music hall was, for all its local variations, largely generic, a formulaic character or stereotype that was replicated by many different performers, while retaining its characteristics as a recognisable iconic figure of national identity. Disseminated by thousands of performers, across Britain, North America and the Irish diaspora, it could be replicated and performed simultaneously at multiple venues, in fact at every local music hall, variety theatre or vaudeville house. If a 'National Theatre' as a literary aesthetic enterprise did not constitute a means of promoting an 'imagined community', the reductive version of national identity projected by the Irish stage figure in a popular form like music hall arguably did.

Morash also makes another important distinction between the experience of print culture—where everyone shares equally in the imagined sense of community—and the intrinsically restricted nature of the theatre performance.

> Hence, the experience of the theatre as performance always throws the national consciousness into contrast; a given play may contribute to the creation of a national consciousness by staging images of national solidarity, but it can only do so while also bringing into being that which resists the national, the local.[67]

This idea—that in theatre the national consciousness is always mediated through the more pervasive, immediate sense of the local, seems to provide an important key to understanding the duality or plurality of identities experienced by at least some expatriate audiences (whether the same is true in the case of the Jewish immigrants, who faced linguistic barriers to identifying with indigenous communities, will be examined in the next chapter). In particular it seems to resonate closely with the experience of music hall in Glasgow, in which expatriate members of the audience could be both simultaneously Irish, and in a local sense, Glaswegian. By this means expression of national identity could be present and celebrated on the stage, yet simultaneously subsumed within an enveloping sense of local fellow feeling within the auditorium, in a way which did not challenge or deny the first impulse. This notion of a coexistence seems to encapsulate the sense of audiences being both Irish—or 'Irish'—*and* Glaswegian. It also at least partially accounts for two observable characteristics of Irish music hall representations and audiences in Glasgow.

The first was that Irish acts and performers remained popular for an enormously long period, from the 1850s to the interwar years. The sense that such acts could be sustained in a formalised way is much more plausible if their status for their audience was compartmentalised as celebratory and iconic.

The second was to reconcile this longevity with the increasing levels of Irish integration within Glasgow society. In fact, while the Irish community retained separate cultural, religious and educational institutions, and sectarian relations remained abrasive, the designations of acts as Irish, in billing and sobriquets, increasingly fell away into the twentieth century. Although one might have expected this as a natural result of integration, in the case of Glasgow the reasons were more complex and rooted in the city's encoded sectarian divide. This did not go away but remained inherently active and present, instantly retrievable through reference to

football clubs supported, the connotations of surnames, and, crucially, the school an individual attended, which in Glasgow always indicated the religious affiliation of the attenders. By the interwar years a large number of star Scottish variety performers came from second or third generation Glasgow Irish backgrounds, including Tommy Lorne, Tommy Morgan, Joe O'Rourke and his sister, 'Master' Joe Petersen (Mary O'Rourke), Renee and Billie Houston and latterly Glen Daly. Most no longer chose to advertise the fact professionally, preferring to regard themselves as Scottish or Glaswegian. But in another sense, they didn't have to. Because everybody already knew.

Notes

1. *Professional*, Jan. 1894.
2. For The Gorbals Story see Bill Findlay (ed.) *Scottish People's Theatre: Plays by Glasgow Unity Writers* (Glasgow: ASLS, 2008), 1–56.
3. Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain*: *Crisis and Neo-Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1981), 156–63.
4. Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull, *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture*: *Inferiorism and the Intellectuals* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989), 2. Nairn, in quoting David Craig's view that 'In the mid-nineteenth century the Scottish literary tradition paused; from 1825 to 1880 there is next to nothing worth attention', adds 'And, one might add, not much worth attention from 1880 to 1920 either.' Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain*, 112–13.
5. Beveridge, and Turnbull, *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture*, 58, 51–61.
6. Harvie writes that 'Roughness underlined the sheer unpleasantness of working-class life. Football, the "bevvy", the sluggish Sunday—these were emotional escapes rather than a form of socialization.' Christopher Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*: *Scotland since 1914*, new ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 118.
7. Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain*, 156–63. See also *Scotch Reels*: *Scotland in Cinema and Television*, ed. Colin McArthur (London: BFI, 1982).
8. Alasdair Cameron and Adrienne Scullion, 'W.F. Frame and the Scottish Theatre Tradition', in *Scottish Popular Theatre and Entertainment*: *Historical and Critical Approaches to Theatre and Film in Scotland*, ed. Cameron and Scullion (Glasgow: Glasgow University Library, 1996), 39–62, here 39. For other reassessments of Lauder see David Goldie, 'Hugh MacDiarmid, Harry Lauder and Scottish Popular Culture', *International Journal of Scottish Literature* (www.ijsl.stir.ac.uk ISSN 1751–2808), 1, Autumn 2006; and Ian Brown, 'In Exile from Ourselves? Tartanry, Scottish Popular Theatre, Harry Lauder and Tartan Day', *Études Écossaises*, 10 (2005), 123–41.

9. Homi K Bhabha, 'Introduction: Narrating the Nation', in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Bhabha (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 4.

10. David Fitzpatrick, 'A curious middle place: the Irish in Britain, 1871–1921', in *The Irish in Britain, 1815–1939*, ed. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley (Savage, MD: Barnes & Noble, 1989), 10–59, Table 1.2, 13; Graham Davis points out that Glasgow experienced a more modest immigration in the 1840s, when 'The number of Irish-born increased by 15,456, representing just over a fifth (22.1 per cent) of the increased population of Glasgow of 70,000 between 1841 and 1851. In the 1850s and 1860s Irish-born new-comers formed only 3 per cent and 6 per cent of Glasgow's additional population.' Graham Davis, 'Little Irelands', in *The Irish in Britain*, ed. Swift and Shelley, 106–7. See also Charles Withers, 'The Demographic History of the City, 1831–1911', in *Glasgow vol. 2: 1830 to 1912*, ed. W. Hamish Fraser and Irene Maver (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 141–62, here 150–1.

11. *Speeches… delivered in the General Assembly 1851*, 8–9, quoted in James E. Handley, *The Irish in Scotland* (Glasgow: John S. Burns, 1964), 107.

12. Andrew Gibb, *Glasgow: The Making of a City* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), 127–30.

13. Colin Pooley, 'Segregation of integration? The residential experience of the Irish in mid-Victorian Britain', in *The Irish in Britain*, ed. Swift and Gilley, (Savage, Barnes & Noble, 1989), 60–83.

14. Handley suggests that by 1841 it was estimated that more than 17,000 Irishmen in Glasgow had taken 'the pledge', and that 30,000 Irish were connected to temperance societies in the city, out of total membership of 50,000: Handley, *The Irish in Scotland*, 17; see also Suzanne Audrey, *Multiculturalism in Practice. Irish, Jewish, Italian and Pakistani Migration to Scotland* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 16–19.

15. Handley, *The Irish in Scotland*, 282.

16. David Krause, 'The Theatre of Dion Boucicault', in *The Dolmen Boucicault* (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1964), 13. See also James Malcolm Nelson, 'From Rory and Paddy to Boucicault's Miles, Shaun and Conn: The Irishman on the London Stage, 1830–1860', *Eire-Ireland*, XIII:3 (Fall 1978), 79–105, 103.

17. *The Era*, 17 Jul.. 31, 1853, 10; 7 Aug.. 1853; 16 Jul.. 23 1865, 12.

18. Playbill, Theatre Royal Glasgow, 22 Nov. 864, UKC/POS/GLA R: 0597415, Templeman Library, University of Kent at Canterbury; pro-gramme, *The Colleen Bawn*, 26 Apr..1873, Edinburgh, Misc. Theatre Progs, Box A, Edinburgh Central Library; Britannia Variety Theatre, 29 Aug. 1896.

19. The Edinburgh-born comedian Arthur Lloyd, who became proprietor of the Queens Royal Theatre, Dublin, in 1874, went on to manage the Shakespeare Music Hall (formerly the Star) in Glasgow in the 1880s. These interlinked patterns of activity continued well into the twentieth century.

Barney Armstrong, comic and co-proprietor of the Queens and Tivoli Variety Theatres in Glasgow, recovered from bankruptcy to manage a Belfast theatre. The summer season companies that Jimmy Logan's father Jack Short presented annually at Bangor in Northern Ireland during the 1930s were similarly typical of performers' entrepreneurial ability to move between markets and audiences. Jimmy Logan, *It's A Funny Life* (Edinburgh: B&W, 1998), 27.

20. Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland. The Literature of the Modern Nation* (London: Vintage, 1996), 29–30.

21. Declan Kiberd, 'The Fall of the Stage Irishman', in *The Genres of the Irish Literary Revival*, ed. Ronald Schleifer (Oklahoma/Dublin: Pilgrim Books/Wolfhound Press, 1980), 39–60, here 42.

22. Richard Allen Cave, 'Staging the Irishman', in *Acts of Supremacy. The British Empire and the Stage, 1790–1930*, ed. J.S. Bratton et al. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 62–128, here 64.

23. As an illustration, the titles of songs from a single page of the song-sheet the *Professional* in 1901 included 'My Own Land', 'We'll Sing to Thee, Dear Ireland', 'Blue are the Eyes of My Kathleen', 'Limerick is Beautiful', 'Hurrah for the Emerald Isle', 'Eily Mavourneen', and 'My Dear Old Irish Home'. *Barr's Professional Gazette & Advertiser*, 15 Jun..1901, 7.

24. 'Dungannon, The Boss of the Bazaar'. Music and Words, Written and Composed by C.R. Armstrong, *Professional*, 8 Aug. 885, 7.

25. 'The Terror of the Briggate', *Professional*, 8 Aug.1885, 7.

26. 'The Girl That Was Dressed Like A Fairy', *Professional* 8 Aug. 1885, 7.

27. Declan Kiberd, Introduction, *The Irish Writer and the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

28. 'Barney Wrought in Dixon's', 'Doing Doctor Tanner', both 'written by James Curren and sung by Pat Connor', *Professional and Authors' Journal*, 21 Feb.. 1885, 6.

29. '"Is It Because I'm Irish!" Written by Felix Fordie Greenock'; '"Oh, Mr Murphy!" Words by Will Moore. Sung by J.P. Curlett with success': *Professional Gazette & Advertiser*, 9 Feb. 1901, 5.

30. 'Mistress O'Hooligan's Son. Written by P. O'Neil, Glasgow, and sung with great success by Frank Cafferty.' *Barr's Professional Gazette & Advertiser*, no. 482, 1 Jun. 901, 4.

31. '"Ireland Once More will Arise from the Dust". Words by P. Sweeney. Music by S. Potter. Sung with immense success by Pat Rooney at the Britannia Music Hall, Glasgow': *Professional*, 28 Feb. 1885, 6.

32. H. Chance Newton, *Idols of the Halls: My Music-Hall Memories*, repr. ed. Wakefield: EP Publishing 1975 (London: Heath Cranton, 1928), 199.

33. Kiberd, Introduction, *The Irish Writer and the World*.

34. Kiberd, 'The Fall of the Stage Irishman', 40.

35. This identification with national imagery in popular entertainments also extended to Irish communities in other Scottish cities. Ruth Forbes has written that in Dundee 'the period around St Patrick's day also saw an increase in the number of acts of an Irish nature, including comedians, singers and popular dramas'. Ruth Forbes, 'Patterns of Cultural Production and Reception in Dundee 1850–1914' (unpublished PhD, University of Dundee, 2003), 332.

36. Christopher Morash, *A History of Irish Theatre, 1601–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 105–6.

37. Irish National League Concerts, *Barr's Monthly Professional and Authors' Journal*, no. 153 (April 1888), 8.

38. *Professional*, 18 May 1889, 8.

39. *Barr's Professional Gazette & Advertiser*, no. 176, 1 Jun. 1889.

40. Don Meade, 'Kitty O'Neil and her "Champion Jig": A Forgotten Irish-American Variety Theatre Star', *New Hibernia Review*, 6:3 (Autumn 2002), 9–22. Robert W. Snyder, *The Voice of the City: Vaudeville and Popular Culture in New York*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000), 23–4, 45, 48, 54. For Cline see Paul Antonie Distler, 'The Rise and Fall of the Racial Comics in American Vaudeville' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Tulane University, 1963), 117–21.

41. See William HA Williams, '*Twas only an Irishman's Dream*': *The Image of Ireland and the Irish in American Popular Song Lyrics, 1800–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 119–124.

42. *Professional*, 16 Apr. 1887.

43. *Glasgow Eastern Standard*, 20 Jun. 1925, 7.

44. Don Meade, 'The Life and Times of "Muldoon, the Solid Man"', *New York Irish History*, vol. 11 (1997), 46.

45. *Professional*, Jan. 1894.

46. *Professional*, 17 Oct. 1885, 4.

47. Cave, 'Staging the Irishman', 120. Ben Levitas,'These Islands' Others: *John Bull*, the Abbey and the Royal Court', in *Irish Theatre in England* (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2007), ed. Richard Cave and Levitas, 18. I am indebted to the editors of *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film* for the Levitas quotation.

48. Robert W Snyder, 'The Irish and Vaudeville', in *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States*, ed. J.J. Lee and Marion R. Casey (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 408.

49. Snyder, 'The Irish and Vaudeville', 407

50. Williams, '*Twas only an Irishman's Dream*', 130.

51. Williams,'*Twas only an Irishman's Dream*', 130.

52. John P. Harrington, *The Irish Play on the New York Stage, 1874–1966* (Champaign: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 11.

53. Morash, *A History of Irish Theatre*, 103.
54. Forbes, 'Patterns of cultural production and reception in Dundee', 343.
55. Julia Williams and Stephen Watt, 'Representing a "Great Distress": Melodrama, Gender and the Irish Famine', in *Melodrama: The Cultural Emergence of a Genre*, ed. Michael Hays and Anastasia Nikolopoulou (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 245–66.
56. Cave, 'Staging the Irishman', 64–8. J.S. Bratton, 'Jenny Hill: Sex and Sexism in Victorian Music Hall', in *Music Hall: Performance and Style*, ed. Bratton (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986), 92–110, here 108.
57. *Glasgow Eastern Standard*, 25 Jul. 13 Jun. 1925, 7.
58. *Professional*, no. 25, Jun. 1885, 4.
59. Cave, 'Staging the Irishman', 67.
60. For Connolly's career see Eric Villiers, *Ireland's First 'Soul' Singer: The Forgotten Story of Mary Connolly* (Omagh: The Postcard Co., 2002).
61. Fintan Cullen, 'From Mythical abstractions to modern realities: depicting the Irish emigrée', in Cullen and R.F. Foster, '*Conquering England,' Ireland in Victorian London* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2005), 54–65.
62. Eugene Watters and Matthew Murtagh, *Infinite Variety: Dan Lowrey's Music Hall 1879–97* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1975), 22–3, 156: Watters and Murtagh suggest Loftus was 'the sort of Hebe that Dublin loved'.
63. *Entertainer*, 11 Oct. 1913, 6.
64. Snyder, 'The Irish and Vaudeville', 407.
65. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 35–6.
66. Chris Morash, 'The Road to God Knows Where: Can Theatre be National?' in Nicholas Grene and Morash, eds., *Irish Theatre on Tour* (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2005), 101–18, here 104–6.
67. Morash, 'The Road to God Knows Where: Can Theatre be National?', 108.

'Ikey Granitestein from Aberdeen': Jewish Stage Representations in Glasgow Music Hall

The strange affinity between the Jew and the Scot has often been commented upon. Doubtless this has arisen through their age-long contact with each other, for do we not read: 'And Isaac lifted up his eyes, and behold, the Campbells were coming.'
   The Aberdeen Jew (1927)

'Roderick Dhu'
When Isaac boasts of Scotch descent,
He proves it to the hilt:
His ancestor was Roderick *Jew*—
And so he wears a kilt.
The Aberdeen Jew (1927)[1]

The previous chapter depicted the stage Irishman as fulfilling a social function beyond that of a comic stereotype. It argued that, through songs and performing material, the figure was adapted to include references to the experience of life in urban Scotland, in a way that reclaimed a popular version of Irish identity for immigrant audiences. It also suggested that, given the extensive circulation of Irish acts between Britain and America, and their popularity on both sides of the Atlantic, music hall became a means of promoting a shared version of Irish identity between diasporic centres. This inevitably came at a price. As Peter Burke has quoted, 'the essential characteristic of cultural transmission is that whatever is transmitted changes'.[2]

In the case of the Irish stage representation, cultural specificity was sacrificed for a more homogenised Irishness which evoked a heavily romanticised and sentimentalised view of Irish history and culture. However, these stage representations nevertheless had a particular utility: they provided a cultural profile for Irish communities that acted as a focal point for emotive national sentiment, and allowed them to proclaim and celebrate their Irish identity in a wider social context, that of the variety theatre.

However, these functions reflected the particular experience of the Irish immigrant community, and the historical and cultural context of its presence in Scotland. Did such stage representations fulfil similar roles for other ethnic groups, or did their utility depend on the character of the groups concerned? In particular, what influence did ethnic stage representations exert when the communities involved were rendered vulnerable by more profound cultural and linguistic barriers?

Glasgow's Jewish community had a very different experience of immigration. The Irish, after all, shared a language and common Celtic culture with the indigenous Scottish population, and had been integral to music hall's development in Glasgow, to the extent that it was suffused with Irish influences, songs and performers. In contrast, Russian and Eastern European Jewish immigrants were highly visible, marked as Other by their dress, cultural practices and incomprehensible languages. Moreover the vibrant Jewish popular theatre and musical traditions that they brought with them were closed, embedded in their own religious and linguistic culture. As a result, the Jewish community's relationship to its depiction in music hall—or on other popular stages—involved debates over issues of assimilation and the propriety of representing their cultural identity to outsiders, a process that was not only alien but, in the view of orthodox sections of Jewish opinion, sacrilegious. This chapter will examine Jewish stage representations in Glasgow, exploring how their appearances at the Panopticon, where they represented an exotic, marginal presence, served as a metaphor for the Jewish community's developing relationship with wider society. It will also compare the experiences of these two groups, the Irish and Jewish communities, to offer some broad conclusions as to the social function of stereotypical representations generally; for example, the extent to which they might have supported the process by which such immigrant communities were assimilated into Scottish society.

To put Jewish immigration into historical context, while the Irish were Glasgow's largest immigrant community, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century they had been joined by a range of other ethnic groups.

Of these groups, which included migrants from the Highlands, lowland areas and the North of England, as well as Italians, Poles, Lithuanians and Hungarians, the Russian Jewish immigrants who arrived in Scotland in the 1880s and 1890s stood out as identifiably exotic. The Jewish community in Glasgow, first established in the early nineteenth century, was 500 strong by 1860. The anti-Semitic pogroms in Russia in 1881 resulted in a vast exodus of Jews to the West, many of whom passed through Scotland en route to their intended destinations in the New World. By 1897 Glasgow's Jewish population had risen to 4000, and further waves of persecution saw it grow to 14,000 in 1921, most of its members being Russian, Lithuanian, Hungarian or Polish Jews who settled in the Gorbals district on the south side.[3] Unlike the Irish, the eastern European incomers spoke a different language, Russian or Yiddish, and followed distinct religious and cultural practices which seemed demonstrably alien. The immigrant Jewish community that developed in the Gorbals, and to a lesser extent north of the river and around Garnethill, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, had its own religious and cultural institutions, and, in particular, vibrant musical, literary and dramatic traditions.

Hebrew Comedians

While Irish performers had featured in music hall from its inception, Jewish acts, or acts which offered representations of Jewish culture or identity, were a later introduction that reflected their later arrival on the urban scene. Notwithstanding a British tradition of derogatory stage depictions of Shylock and Fagin, a formalised Jewish music hall profile only emerged around the turn of the twentieth century in the form of the 'Hebrew' comedian. The usage of 'Hebrew' in this context seems to have derived from American cultural developments. (H.L. Mencken identified it as an affectation by American-Jewish advertisers, who found it flattering, but was disappointed to note that attempts by 'more cultured American Jews' to restore the more direct 'Jew' seemed to have had little effect.[4])

In a Scottish context, the term began to feature in soubriquets and billings in Glasgow variety theatres from the early 1900s, (see Table 4.1) indicating a body of performers which, while it never rivalled the popularity of Scottish, Irish or blackface acts, nevertheless constituted a newly recognisable sub-genre. These performers all broadly offered representations of Jewish characters that, as with those of Scotch and Irish comics, focussed on the stereotypical traits with which they were supposedly

Table 4.1 'Hebrew' performers appearing in Glasgow, c.1906–1919

Jordan and Harvey, *The two great Hebrew Comedians*
Halter and Ray, *Hebrew Comedian and Soubrette*
Hearne and Palmer, *The Hebrew and the barman*
Lowenwirth and Cohan, *The Hebrew Aeroplaners*
Julian Rose, *Clever Hebrew monologue humourist*
Friend and Downing, *Hebrew Comedians*
Clarke and Davis, *In a clever Hebrew act*
Young and Evans, *Popular Hebrew comedians*
Sam Liebert, *The Greatest of all Jew Comedians*
Harry Weber, *Hebrew comedian*
James R. Waters, *The Great American Hebrew Comedian*
Charles Cohen, *Britain's premier Hebrew Comedian*
Nat Carr, *America's Greatest Jewish Comedian*
Hayman and Franklin, *Popular delineaters of Hebrew comedy*
Gilday and Fox, *'The famous Yiddisher comedians'*
Charles Cohen, *Britain's premier Hebrew Comedian*
H.C. Vicars, '*Yiddle on your fiddle*'
Dave Samuels, *The popular kilted Hebrew*
Harry Weber, *Hebrew comedian*
Sam Liebert, *'The Greatest of all Jew Comedians'*
Gus Harris, *The famous Hebrew comedian*
Charles Cohen, *Britain's premier Hebrew Comedian*
Abie Cohen, *Hebrew Comedian in song and story*
Estelle Rose, *In Hebrew and Italian studies*

Source: Glasgow Programme, Entertainer, Eagle

identified. In the case of the Irish these were drunkenness, stupidity and indolence; for Jews commercial craftiness and business savvy, meanness and lack of hygiene.

Samm Hankin, later one of the founders of the influential community theatre group the Glasgow Jewish Institute Players, performed a 'Hebrew' act at Go-as-you-please competitions at Miners' Welfare Institutions as a boy in 1919, and later went on the halls professionally for a time. He recalled the circumstances:

> I wanted to perform, so I pinched an act from a quite famous performer at the time. In those days there were a lot of what was known as 'Hebrew Comedians'—There was Gilday and Fox, Lowenwirth and Cohan, Harry Gareen, Julius—and I pinched one of these acts. What were they? They were Hebrew comedians the way the non-Jew thought a Jew would be. […] So I went to the first one … Coatdyke, and there was a Miners' Welfare competition

there and I got second prize, a pound, which was a lot of money at that particular period, and I did this Jewish act, this Hebrew comedian.[5]

He explains the substance of the Hebrew performance:

Well, he tells the story of going to a wedding, he says 'There were so many people there!' He describes the wedding, he says 'Mrs Goldberg was crying, Mrs Cohen was crying. And Mrs Armstein—she was sweating. And then it came to the reception. And when they saw the food laid out on the table, they made such a rush, you'd think they had never seen food in their lives before! You know, I had four forks stuck in my hand! …' This was the sort of patter I used.

The act Hankin describes was a version of the most famous Hebrew sketch, 'Levinsky at the Wedding', originated by the American comedian Julian Rose, who made a number of recordings of it. Essentially an extended monologue, (which closely resembled the observational material used by modern stand-up comedians), its rich, gossipy evocation of Jewish family life proved endlessly refreshable and, in countless variations, became the key script for Hebrew comic performances.[6]

As the Levinsky sketch indicates, the Hebrew comic genre originated in America, and the ethnic 'dialect' comedians that became popular from around the turn of the century. Prior to their emergence Jewish performers had been prominent in vaudeville, but usually in surrogate identities—as blackface performers, or in Irish or 'Dutch' (meaning German) acts.[7] These heavily burlesqued performances anticipated the advent of the thickly-accented Hebrew comedian, who spoke—mostly gibberish—in a guttural accent which combined genuine Yiddish words and turns of phrase with others which were invented.[8] The prototype performer in the field was probably Frank Bush, whose bizarre appearance 'in grotesque Jew make-up: tall, rusty plug hat, long black coat, shabby pants, long beard which ran to a point, and large spectacles', accompanied by eccentric dancing, provided the visual template for the Hebrew persona.

In Britain, the arrival of Hebrew acts in the early 1900s, initially brought by American performers, provoked a debate among the religious and literary classes of the British Jewish community.

The initial reaction of Glasgow's Jews to Hebrew acts is hard to determine, not least because its English language newspaper, the *Jewish Echo*, did not begin publication until 1928. But in the wider national community, battle-lines were staked out early on. In 1908 the London-published *Jewish Chronicle*, the self-proclaimed voice of British Jewry, inveighed:

> One of the most recent introductions on the 'variety' stage is the Hebrew comedian, an importation from the land of the dollar. He is generally a performer of the Jewish faith, and his 'turn' consists in mimicking the dress, speech, deportment and most striking characteristics of his alien brother. His attire usually comprises a frock coat, whose age can be calculated by the brilliance with which it shines, and a silk (?) hat, which, to meet the popular demand, must be pulled well over the ears. Now there is a class of Jewish habitué of the music-hall which revels in this sort of thing, and, on the other hand, a 'turn' of this description is quite sufficient to keep a would-be Jewish patron at a distance. It is not pretty to see one's race lampooned for hire by a coreligionist, and one is not necessarily 'touchy' if one resents it.[9]

The debate sparked by the Hebrew comedians defines the very different reaction the Jewish representation elicited within its community compared to that of the Irish. While the stage Irish figure had developed over a considerable period and broadly parallel to the process of immigration, the Jewish music-hall representation emerged seemingly fully-formed, carrying specific socio-economic connotations and resonances, and at a particular historical moment of considerable sensitivity for Jewish communities in Britain. With Jewish immigrants still very much establishing themselves in British society, the introduction of the Hebrew figure (Fig. 4.1), with its coarse evocation of ghetto life and backstreet trading, seemed an unwelcome throwback to sections of the community concerned with achieving integration.

The dispute resulted in bitter exchanges between the liberal intelligentsia and orthodox religious opinion. In the *Jewish Chronicle*, a Jewish cleric was attacked for endorsing a Hebrew comic whose 'repertoire consists in the representation of a shabby and stunted individual', and whose act, 'while it was undoubtedly laughter provoking … conveyed to the audience an utterly false and damaging picture of the Jew'.[10] A second correspondent vehemently disagreed, stating 'it is high time for all Jews to take a broader view of life generally', seeing the outburst as 'only one instance of a Jew crying out in horror because something is stated or done about a Jew which does not happen to suit him. Have we not got our Scotch, Irish and Welsh comedians, and do we not enjoy to hear jokes about them? Why should we object so much when a joke is made about us?'[11] However, another writer denied the notion of humour as fair comment by claiming overt racism, stating that Hebrew comedians:

by making a mockery of their own coreligionists and committing a series of murderous assaults on the English language, greatly tend to spread Jewish hatred amongst the ignorant class of the British public, and all this is done in quite an exaggerated anti-Semitic fashion. Is it to be wondered, then, that religious intolerance is so rife in England when members of our own faith help and aid in its furtherance? Can one wonder that one cannot pass a street corner without being taunted with 'Solomon that's me!' or some other idiotic song, when it is remembered that the song is sung by a Jew?[12]

Fig. 4.1 'James R. Waters, The Great American Hebrew Comedian … in his famous Italian and Hebrew impersonations'. *The Entertainer*, 1 Nov. 1913 (© CSG CIC Glasgow Museums and Libraries Collections)

This allegation, that such performers were buying success at the cost of betraying their own people, was a reminder that, in cultural terms, the stakes were felt to be much higher for the Hebrew comedian than for other representations such as the Stage Irishman, who seemed, paradoxically, to be held by the wider public at a remove from the sectarian prejudices that otherwise dogged the Irish in the West of Scotland.

The heart of the Hebrew persona was the so-called dialect style of performance. For many critics, the most offensive part of this, beyond the coarseness of the jokes and performing material, was the depiction of the protagonist as a shambolic, threadbare 'ghetto' figure, characterised by 'the bowler hat pressed over the ears, … sparse and ill-trimmed beard' and 'frock coat and baggy trousers'. In a Jewish culture highly sensitive to social distinctions surrounding learning and respectability, and which revered its elders, the loss of dignity of this shabby characterisation was acutely felt. Among the physical tropes of the performance, what was termed the 'business with the hands', their rubbing together to signal greedy anticipation at the prospect of money or profit, was also found particularly objectionable.[13]

If the social implications of the costume were repugnant, the defining element of the 'Hebrew' characterisation was the thickly-accented delivery, with its mittel-European inflections and eccentric Yiddish wordplay, from which much of the comedy derived. The thick accent served to reinforce several derogatory traits, the guttural tones emphasising both foreignness and, through words and references to food and religious holidays, the alien culture of the character. Moreover, although most of the jokes concerned the figure's meanness and sharp business acumen, his eccentric English, with its muddled syntax, made him feel simultaneously clumsy and stupid. The notion of intelligence conveyed was crafty, one-dimensional 'native cunning', oblivious to social gaffes.

The promotion of this ethnic or 'dialect' profile was acutely sensitive for Jewish immigrant communities, which offered an easy target for misrepresentation. In the case of Glasgow, there were two particular reasons why the Hebrew comic characterisation was extremely uncomfortable.

The first was the conspicuousness of the city's Jewish population, and the danger of fuelling existing levels of anti-Semitic prejudice. In Glasgow the community centred on the Gorbals was essentially transient. Many immigrants who arrived there in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries were passing through on their way to the New World, while others would return to their original regions in Lithuania or other Russian

territories. As they often arrived speaking no English, language constituted an important barrier to interaction with the indigenous population. Many of the older generation who stayed never really learnt to speak English. (Alex Frutin related that his father Bernard relied instead on his children to develop fluent command of the language.) The resulting Scots-Yiddish developed by this generation, which lasted from the 1890s to the 1940s, and which David Daiches has written so vividly of in his descriptions of the travelling Jewish salesmen or 'trebblers' who frequented the Fife coast, was a richly colourful mixture of idioms which, together with their distinct dress and social bearing, clearly marked its speakers out as Jewish.[14] Although the Gorbals was by no means an exclusively Jewish enclave, in that Irish, Italian and Highland immigrants also lived there, the very cosmopolitanism of the area, its mixture of accents, languages and cultures, gave it a decidedly middle-European feel.[15]

As a result of these factors, Jews were widely regarded, in Harley Erdman's phrase, as 'exotic Others, foreigners living in the modern industrial West yet somehow not of it'.[16] Moreover in late-nineteenth century Glasgow anti-Semitic attitudes were regularly expressed in the popular press, usually in the context of censure for what were perceived as anti-social acts. A reporter visiting the Scotia Music Hall in Stockwell Street, close to the Britannia, in 1886:

> was annoyed the whole time I was in by three or four 'sheenys,' who kept on singing with all the artistes that came out trying to be funny, and otherwise making it very disagreeable for most of the spectators who sat in the back portion of the circle. […] a gentleman beside me said that they were regular attenders and created the same nuisance every time they come in. I think for the comfort of the many respectable people who visit the circle in this very popular house, those Israelites should be made [to] behave themselves like Christians, or else refused admission altogether.[17]

Instances of sharp business practise were also likely to be singled out. In 1909 a recent resolution by the Town Council, intended to allow 'hawkers of the poorest classes' to sell second-hand goods from stances in East Clyde Street, was reported to have been taken advantage of by street traders, and particularly 'the alien Jew', to the detriment of the shopkeepers in the street, whose premises were obscured (Fig. 4.2).

> All the way from the Saltmarket to the Stockwell bridge, where in former days only a few barrows collected weekly, hundreds can now be seen standing

five deep, and laden with goods which appear to have been procured specially for the street trade. As a matter of fact, seventy five per cent of those engaged in this way on Saturday night are aliens of the Jewish persuasion … One Jew has four barrows, attended by himself, his wife, his son, and his daughter and in another case one of the chosen race has six barrows. … Is this fair to the honest shopkeeper? He has to bear his share of the burdens of the ordinary citizen, and his means of livelihood are filched away by unscrupulous aliens, who very frequently make higher profits than the man who pays his rent and taxes.[18]

More insidious anti-Semitism took the form of throwaway press snippets and jibes. So Councillor Cohen, a prominent Jewish local politician who represented the Springburn ward, was subjected to an 'Open letter to Councillor Cohen', headed 'Cohen's Comicalities', in which his championing of a municipal zoo saw him lampooned in a cartoon as a (Semitic) circus ringmaster, with a caption that ran 'Ladies and Shentlemen, dit you evaire

Typical Faces of Barrow Merchants in
East Clyde Street.

Fig. 4.2 'Typical faces of Barrow Merchants in East Clyde Street'. *Eagle*, 29 April 1909 (© CSG CIC Glasgow Museums and Libraries Collections)

see such a fine collection of vild beasts enyveres else?'[19] Given this level of pre-existing prejudice, it was not surprising that many saw the Hebrew comedian, with his dodgy business practices and gleeful allusions to cheating customers, as perpetuating negative images of Jewish tradesmen.

A second reason the stage Hebrew character was unwelcome in Glasgow was that the seedy dialect persona exposed a genuine divide between older and newer cultures within the local Jewish community. In Glasgow the older Jewish society established in the Garnethill area from the mid-nineteenth century was Western European in origin, with a cosmopolitan, liberal outlook. In contrast, the Russian and East-European Jews who arrived in larger numbers from the 1880s and settled in the Gorbals were culturally very different, being generally of lower socioeconomic status, Yiddish speaking and more religiously orthodox. The cultural clash between the new, more religiously fundamentalist incomers and the more integrated, westernised community already established led to tensions. The Hebrew comic representation of the Jewish street trader, which clearly corresponded to the recent Russian immigrant stereotype, was therefore doubly offensive to sections of the older established community who valued the measure of integration they had achieved within Scottish society, and deeply resented being associated with the poverty and 'foreignness' of the Hebrew comic representation.

Given the uncomfortable resonances of these Hebrew acts, it was understandable that sections of educated Jewish opinion were anxious to move stage representations of Jewish identity forward to a more sophisticated and, as they saw it, positive, self-image.

In the event a wider debate, as far as Hebrew comedians went, was partly forestalled by the emergence of a development of the original 'Julian Rose'-style dialect comedian. Writers in the Jewish press who disliked the original Hebrew comic were quick to herald its replacement by a new, smarter style of performer. Although commentators discerned this change at various points up until the 1920s, suggesting almost a collective willing into extinction of the older-style performance, the Hebrew act was indeed evolving, influenced by American developments, into something more sophisticated. The newer fashion was for acts with an emphasis on crosstalk or clever dextrous verbal humour. As one writer put it, in anticipating a 'new, modern up-to-date type of Hebrew', 'the wit can be Jewish and yet crisp, the repartee Jewish yet sparkling'.[20] Another journalist, similarly celebrating that 'the Hebrew comedian has shed the more undesirable of his characteristics', wrote approvingly of a duo whose act, titled 'The Hebrew

MP' (previously seen in Glasgow at the Pavilion in 1915) involved one initiating the other into the mysteries of parliamentary life.[21] While aspects of the costume persisted, the wholesomeness, wit and 'cleanness' of the act were all felt to confer dignity.

At the same time, a series of popular plays and sketches, also emanating from America, introduced a new emphasis on Jewish comedy centred on the worlds of business and commerce, in a style that anticipated the fast-talking humour of the early talkies. The originator of the trend was probably Montague Glass's comedy *Potash and Perlmutter*, which was seen in Glasgow on numerous occasions. In a production which visited the King's Theatre in April 1916, the Hebrew comedian James R. Waters took the role of Abe Potash, one of the two protagonists in a comic plot which revolved around the partners' efforts to save their New York garment company from creditors by launching a new collection.[22] The same week, the American originators of the roles of 'Abe and Mawruss', Augustus Yorke and Robert Leonard, were also appearing in Glasgow at the Alhambra, in a sketch entitled 'Isadore, You Tell Her', in which they again played the two characters. Having already appeared in a previous sequel, 'In Lingerie', they here returned in a new ragtrade scenario, in which they were now running a business making blouses.[23] Other examples of this sort of piece included the musical sketch 'Goldman Ltd', and the comedy sketch 'The Meanest Man on Earth', which featured Nathan Grimson as Isaac Goldberg, both of which visited the Empire in 1916. Musicals and dramas began to offer more varied and sympathetic representations of Jewish characters. Other recent productions had included 'the celebrated actor' Herbert Landeck and his company in his well-known sketch, 'The Son of a Jew', which played the Pavilion in February 1914; and Sam Liebert, 'the Greatest of all Jew comedians' who appeared in Glasgow in 1914 in the American burlesque 'Red-Heads'.[24]

One result of these pieces was that, by making the audience identify with the protagonists, they invited them to empathise with the characters. No doubt the fact that they were American Jews helped. But the result was nevertheless significant. As one Glasgow entertainment weekly put it, '"Potash and Perlmutter" sends you away feeling happier for a good laugh—and for a better knowledge of the Jew and all the good that is in him.'[25]

The plays also represented the start of a shift in social attitudes which was advantageous to perceptions of the Jewish community. By setting the comic storyline in a commercial environment, the world of business was

represented as fast-moving, dynamic and compelling, the stuff of modern living. By extension, Jews, widely identified with commerce, were at least depicted in a different context.

While the business orientation of these more modern, cosmopolitan pieces marked a social improvement, an implicit racism was still firmly present in their reception in Glasgow. A previewer of the musical sketch 'Goldman Ltd.', the 'special Easter attraction' at the Empire, seemed oblivious to the racist tone of the assumptions he voiced about Jewish business practises. Praising its star, Arthur Aiston, 'whose satirical yet inoffensive delineation of the Hebrew has earned him a wide reputation as a single turn', he went on to suggest that:

> Because of his special kinship with the Jewish race, Mr Aiston has no call to create situations out of pure imagination. Of course this extravaganza contains the necessary amount of emphasis upon the reputed business methods of his race.[26]

The inference was that Aiston didn't need to invent incidents necessary to lend the plot verisimilitude, but would already know all about fiddling and sharp practise by dint of being Jewish. (This was nothing new. Hebrew acts had often attracted ambivalent responses from the Glasgow press. Following an early Julian Rose appearance at the Pavilion, one writer, remarking on his billing as 'America's Greatest Hebrew Comedian', suggested 'he is too much Hebrew and too little comedian for my taste. His particular talent doesn't suit audiences on this side of the "herring pond"'[27]).

If this insidious anti-Semitism remained an undercurrent, it periodically surfaced to greater prominence, as during the Oscar Slater trial of 1909. Involving the conviction of a German Jew for a notorious Glasgow murder, largely on the basis of his race and previous record as a pimp and petty criminal, this became the focus for widespread insinuations regarding the moral character of the Jewish community. The broader issue was deep-rooted public insecurity over immigration: as Ben Braber has written, 'the case reveals that in Glasgow it was not the often assumed Jewish involvement in fraud and political violence, but the growing presence of Jewish immigrants and their alleged participation in vice, especially prostitution, which fuelled existing fears about the condition of society and gave them an anti-Jewish edge'.[28]

The anti-Semitic context in which the Hebrew comedian emerged therefore provided a much stiffer test of the impact of ethnic stage representations on the social cohesion of audiences than that faced by the stage

Irishman. The strongly expressed racial antipathy to Jews was in marked contrast to the often celebratory reception accorded to Irish performers and acts, for all that their own social relations were highly problematic. My previous observations about the stage Irishman reflected on that figure's benefits in adapting Irish identity to Scottish life, and providing a focal point for Irishness in the diaspora. But the Irish were music hall insiders, linguistically and culturally at home in the halls, whose musical and performing traditions were readily adapted to its format. The Jews by contrast were perceived as religiously and culturally Other.

How Ethnic Stage Representations Worked

The disparity between the positions of the two communities—Jewish and Irish—raises the question of how ethnic stage representations in general worked in highly competitive multi-cultural urban contexts, and what the social function was that explained their resonance with audiences, given their competing loyalties and antagonisms? Were they aimed solely at wider indigenous Scottish society? Or were they intended for their own respective groups? And, if the groups concerned aspired to become integrated into Scottish society, did these stereotypical representations help contribute to, or detract from, a climate of social cohesion in which this might be effected?

In seeking to theorise these stage representations, my approach has been greatly informed by research on dialect or ethnic performers in American vaudeville, particularly in the case of Jewish acts. The reason for this is the parallels between patterns of Jewish immigration to Britain and the United States in the key period from the 1880s to the First World War. Although the scale of Jewish emigration to America was far larger,[29] the cultural tensions involved in the processes of assimilation and integration experienced by Jews in urban American society offer many points of comparison with the experience of Jews in British cities like Glasgow.

While most of this work attributes a broadly positive influence to dialect performances, writers differ considerably in their analysis of the way that they functioned. Robert Snyder suggests that it was the crude characterisation of ethnic stage representations—that many in the groups depicted found offensive—that held the key to their intended audience, and to the social function they enacted. As Snyder expresses it, dialect acts:

> did not often present immigrant culture to their ethnically diverse audiences. Instead they expressed a synthetic ethnicity formed from elements of

immigrant experiences, mass culture, and the stereotyped natural and racial characters of the American theatre.

In other words, these were stereotypes, which weren't meant to be accurate or balanced, but rather:

> provided simple characteristics that roughly explained immigrants to native-born Americans and introduced immigrant Americans to each other. They were identifying markers on a bewildering landscape of races, nationalities and cultures.[30]

Writing about Jewish performances, Harley Erdman concurs on the intentional crudity of dialect characterisations, which he terms 'the unambiguous marking of difference', but also chooses to stress their potential for empowerment. As Erdman sees it, by working within existing theatre genres, 'Jews resisted, assimilated or reordered images that a dominant culture constructed for them, and then emerged embodying new performances of themselves.'[31] This view is shared by Lawrence Epstein, who, believing that Jewish performers have shaped the comic sensibilities of mainstream modern American humour, similarly characterises the development of ethnic performances as a negotiated exchange. In support of this, he refers not to assimilation but rather to acculturation, which he defines as 'a process by which two cultures borrow from each other so that what emerges is a new or blended culture'.[32]

While these writers all regard dialect performance as involving broad comic stereotypes or caricatures, the aspect that is harder to recover is what gave the characterisations appeal for the subjects of the impersonation. If the emotive power of Irish acts helps account for their popularity with Irish expatriates, the Hebrew comic idiom is more problematic, given the racist tone of the characterisation. In this case, the issue very much revolves around the social impact of anti-Semitic humour and, as Lawrence Mintz puts it, 'whether such expression tends to lead to or justify actual acts of hostility, or whether it might neutralize or soften anger by providing alternative channels of expression for it'.[33] The latter 'safety valve' argument is one which has definite resonance in the context of Glasgow's tense race relations.

The challenge for researchers is perhaps not to question whether the ethnic humour of these performers was insensitive or racist by modern standards: it is rather to move beyond contemporary moral sensibilities to

explore whether contexts existed in which this material might have worked in ways that could be construed as socially constructive.

Christie Davies, a British sociologist who has written extensively on ethnic humour, draws important distinctions between different types of jokes involving Jews by dividing them into three categories—Jewish, anti-Semitic, and others revolving around characteristics of 'canniness' shared with the Scots, a hybrid he terms 'Hebredonian'. Of the three categories, Davies stresses the extent to which much Jewish humour is directed at aspects of Jewish culture, often affectionately, and that other jokes are often transferable to other economic or social groups. Only the anti-Semitic jokes were consistently 'highly negative' towards Jews on what might be termed uniquely racial grounds.[34] However, within this category Davies also disparages the idea of a direct correlation between anti-Semitic jokes and the effective propagation of anti-Semitic political ideology. Suggesting that such material never goes far enough for these groups' agendas, he rather stresses:

> how unimportant and impotent ethnic jokes are when compared to the political malice of the powerful and the deliberate propagation of an overly hostile ideology … There is inevitably an overlap between the content of these jokes and the content of these hostile ideologies but the jokes are not themselves part of the ideology.[35]

Given Glasgow's abrasive race relations in our period, Davies' research might help account for the disparity between the Hebrew construct's popularity and the distastefulness of its material. The notion that anti-Semitic jokes, while offensive, might be ideologically ineffective indicates a greater complexity or depth to dialect comedy.

Another partial explanation of how the figure might have worked is provided by Paul Antonie Distler, who, in contrast to the schematic view of dialect performances as products of socio-economic tensions, instead sees them in broader terms of community. Characterising the performances as (literally) character burlesques, in the sense of a gentle form of satire, he regards the figures not as outlandish but simply as extreme exaggerations of what were recognisable types within their respective ethnic communities. While this might seem a fine distinction, the crucial aspect for Distler is the experiential link on the part of the audience. So although he agrees that the ethnic characterisations were heavily conventionalised—conceived in exterior terms of 'clothes, general facial characteristics and accents'—they were not grotesques, but rather rooted in the

audience's immediate experience of urban living. For Distler, this recognition, born of direct experience of the types portrayed, was the crucial key to the audience response. When society changed, and communities developed and moved on, transforming the character of neighbourhoods, the appeal of dialect acts faded because the 'types' on which the caricatures were based had disappeared: 'the human point of reference no longer existed'.[36]

A similar insight comes in a 1912 interview with the American Hebrew comedian Joe Welch, who describes his portrayals, widely regarded as virulently offensive, as being based on close observation of people he knew, ascribing their effectiveness to the fact that 'Dialect comedy is so intensely human.'[37] Like Distler's reminder of the importance of direct experience of immigrant living, this allusion to ethnic performances' 'intense humanity' illuminates the special appeal of the pathos and melancholy that constituted the Hebrew genre's other, less recoverable aspect: the evocation of the dispossessed, suffering Jew, alone in the world that, as we shall see, constituted the special dolorous provenance of Hebrew performers like Ike Freedman.

If Christie Davies has made an intellectual case for the separation of what seem racist jokes from racist ideologies, these American critical responses have provided a possible model with which to theorise the success of dialect acts, and to test against the impact of Hebrew performances in Glasgow. In it, performances were encoded by the experience of immigrant living, the frictions and irritations of particular groups given dimension and vented through a racial caricature on a vaudeville stage. However without the same lived experience, modern researchers lack a vital piece of contextual information that allows us to make sense of the performance.[38]

These ideas very much complement the two wider theories—propounded by Homi Bhabha and Benedict Anderson—that I introduced in the previous chapter, and which I wished to use as the basis of my approach. These were the theory of society evolving as a shifting, constantly developing and eliding cultural negotiation—what Bhabha terms 'the cultural temporality of the nation'; and the complementary notion, explored by Anderson and Bhabha, that in this discourse, the cutting edge of cultural development lies in interactions that take place on the periphery or margins.[39] The American researchers discussed previously have proved very useful in providing models of how these two broader theories might apply to immigrants in similar urban contexts to those experienced in Glasgow over much the same timescale.

In particular, the suggestion that crudely-delineated music hall representations of Jews and the Irish such as those I have examined, which seem highly negative to modern observers, might have had a significant socialising or acculturating impact seems highly credible in the context of Glasgow's confused cultural relations. In fact, one of the striking aspects of my research has been the level of ignorance it has revealed in attitudes towards immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This was particularly the case on cultural issues. While anti-Irish prejudice was rooted in religious difference, much of the hostility aimed at Eastern European immigrants, and particularly Jews, seems to have been based on fear and incomprehension of their cultural practices. This sometimes even extended to confusing the actual nationalities involved. Lithuanians working in steel production in Bellshill in the early twentieth century were repeatedly referred to as Polish by local people, in what was a widespread misapprehension at the time.[40] Genuine Polish immigrants were themselves subject to virulent racist polemics. A 1909 item in the *Eagle* decrying their poor hygiene, called for all Poles to be driven out of Lanarkshire.

The corollary to such invective was the Scottish public's barely-repressed fascination with the domestic and cultural lives of immigrants whose incomprehensible languages—Russian, Yiddish, Lithuanian or Polish—often acted as a barrier to their social interaction with the indigenous population. This fascination, manifested as a public curiosity, bordering on prurience, was sustained by press articles on subjects such as Jewish marriage customs and social ceremonies, themselves the very topics on which much Hebrew comic stage material was centred. One such piece in the *Clydebank Press* in 1896, entitled 'At a Jewish Wedding', gave an almost anthropologically detailed description of the rituals involved and their significance, respectfully concluding 'there are, in fact, no happier homes than those where a Jewish couple preside'.[41]

These attitudes and their attendant racist language and assumptions characterised the abrasive face of social relations in Glasgow well into the twentieth century. An interview subject who regularly attended the Panopticon as a boy in the 1930s confirmed that at the time 'there was a tremendous amount of anti-semitism in Glasgow, even I was aware of that', recalling that prejudice also extended to other ethnic groups, including the Italians.[42] Against this background, ethnic stage characterisations that went some way to explaining, however crudely, their respective groups and cultures, or which showed them in a social context, imbued with some sympathetic traits, were probably making an important contribution.

A second theme, again taking its cue from Bhabha, is that of fluidity and hybridity, and of these stage characterisations' relationship to urban social developments taking place at the margins or limits of social interaction. This notion of shifts in cultural identity being negotiated at the periphery—or 'borderlands,' as Harvey Erdman puts it—is applicable to ethnic stage representations in several different respects.

One, again echoing American practices, is the frequency with which Irish and Jewish characterisations were juxtaposed with other ethnicities in songs and sketches. Hebrew double-acts often included an Irish character who served to amplify and exaggerate the Semitic nature of his colleague, as in Friend and Downings' 'Rosenthal and Harrigan' characters (Fig. 4.3). Peel and Curtis, Gorbals-born comics whose real names were Blass and Spilg, were billed as 'Two new Yiddish comedians with more than a touch of Irish in them.' Racial jokes and sketches often paired Irish and Jewish protagonists, or juxtaposed characteristics, as in the song 'Abie's Irish Rose', one of a number in this vein sung by Ike Freedman, the Glasgow Jewish comedian whose career will be examined later in this chapter.

Fluidity is also evident in the fact that these stage representations were strongly performative. Snyder's view of the social function of dialect acts—that they were designed to provide indigenous audiences with a basic handle on the ethnic identity of the community portrayed—explains why their cultural authenticity was much less important than their vivid stage realisation in the hands of a skilled performer. It wasn't as important to *be* Irish or Jewish, as it was to be able to deliver the formalised stage characteristics of these identities, in terms of their accents, dress, gestures, mannerisms and behavioural characteristics. On a professional basis music hall performers had long treated ethnic personae—Irish, Scotch, or Dutch comedian—as interchangeable identities to be picked up, used and discarded according to professional advantage. Not all Hebrew comedians were Jewish, and it was common in Scotland for performers to try their hand as Irish or Scotch comedians. This dual aspect had important implications for the crudity of some portrayals. The fact that these characterisations were both representatives of an ethnic minority, at a time when that could be extremely sensitive, and yet simultaneously also part of the dressing-up-box repertoire of jobbing music hall pros, to adopt at will, meant they were inevitably open to abuse from performers with no cultural investment in the characters, in the form of overly coarse depictions.

Fig. 4.3 Friend and Downing, Hebrew Comedians (Author's collection)

In discussing the hybridity of Irish and Jewish representations, the missing aspect is that of the Scottish stage identity, which, far from being a default or control against which ethnic progress could be measured, was itself fluid, the subject of ongoing reinvention and negotiation. The

stereotypical Scottish music hall construct, the Scotch Comic, and its associations with tartanry and the Kailyard, have long been the subject of critical debate, much of it negative. However some commentators, among them Alasdair Cameron and Adrienne Scullion, have suggested that, in an argument broadly in line with those I have advanced, the Scotch Comic was a deliberate and essentially celebratory caricature, a composite figure intended to provide a starting point for a consensual image of a new Scottish identity that fitted the circumstances of modern urban Scotland.[43] In some respects this sets the Scotch comic on an equal footing with the other ethnic stage representations discussed. The Scotch figure after all similarly retained a certain contentiousness—arguably part of its goading, provocative remit—while embodying a totemic version of native Scottish identity for immigrant communities, in the same way that the stage Irish and Jewish performances represented a reductive take on their own cultures for Scottish audiences.

Sometimes crass tartan representations overlapped with other ethnic identities to the mutual embarrassment of those in both communities minded to take offence: just as some middle-class Scots blanched at Scotch comics traducing their national culture, so the *Jewish Chronicle*, which similarly despaired at the self-hating jokes of Hebrew comedians, was equally mortified by the 'Whitechapel Scotchmen' of a London cycling club, who 'bear[ing] testimony to the influence of the music hall upon impressionable youth', turned out for a charity race dressed as Kosher Scotsmen, 'bowler-hatted, kilted and bewhiskered', where 'in almost every case the dangling sporran … was a matzo'.[44]

So far, we have examined Irish and Jewish stage performances, their multiple meanings, and the influence they exerted on urban cultural relations largely in terms of performing genres. However, venues and the territorial implications of their locations in terms of audiences were also highly significant. The Britannia itself also played a key role as the venue where audiences came together to encounter these representations.

The social complexion and character of any individual music hall or theatre was reliant on a number of related factors—its location, position in relation to competing venues, the socio-economic and ethnic profile of its catchment areas, and its entertainment and ticket-pricing policy. In the case of the Britannia, the status of the Irish as the city's largest immigrant group from the 1840s, and their strong presence in areas immediately adjoining it suggest that they constituted an important part of the hall's audience. In contrast Jewish immigrants, while likely to have been present

in the Britannia/Panopticon audience—as we have learnt they were at the nearby Scotia music hall in the 1880s—would have probably remained a small minority. Yet this imbalance serves to emphasise the Panopticon's representative significance as a venue located in contested territory. In fact, although the main Jewish community was located across the river in the Gorbals, by the turn of the century there was a small Jewish enclave situated north of the Clyde in the immediate vicinity of the Panopticon: the area bounded by Trongate, Stockwell Street, East Howard Street, Briggate and Saltmarket.

Known as the 'Little Gorbals', in 1901 this area was home to around 700 Jews, or 16 per cent of the total Jewish population of the Gorbals (Map 4.1).[45] Competition arising from this Jewish presence could lead to friction, as in the case of the dispute in East Clyde Street in 1909 mentioned earlier, where what was seen as the aggressive behaviour of Jewish street traders in securing pitches was heightened by cultural and linguistic differences. The close proximity of the locations involved, in what was a densely populated city-centre area, throws the underlying tensions into sharp relief. East Clyde Street itself was situated within the Little Gorbals area, a few minutes walk from the Panopticon.

The social context of this meeting was crucial. In early twentieth-century Glasgow Jews as a minority were widely discriminated against. Excluded from much rented accommodation on more-or-less openly stated grounds of race, their prominence in the tailoring industry led them to be associated with exploitative 'sweated' labour, disease and illness, while they were also labelled as both strike-breakers, who undercut the efforts of other workers, and as politically disruptive.[46] The Panopticon therefore represented precisely the territorial cusp or margin of influence under discussion, one of the peripheral points of intersection where Jewish immigrants and indigenous Glaswegians might meet and see images of one another: where Jewish performers might encounter a wider urban audience, and engage them and their prejudices and preconceptions with a representation of what it was, on some level, to be Jewish.

With time, by the 1920s, these stage characterisations—which were often cruel and bigoted, but which on some level served to educate their audiences about, if not the differences between cultures, then at least the *idea* of difference itself—became increasingly readable by audiences. As if to reflect this greater sophistication, an increasing element of play entered into performers' ethnic songs and characterisations. The hybridity which had always been present in the many contradictions
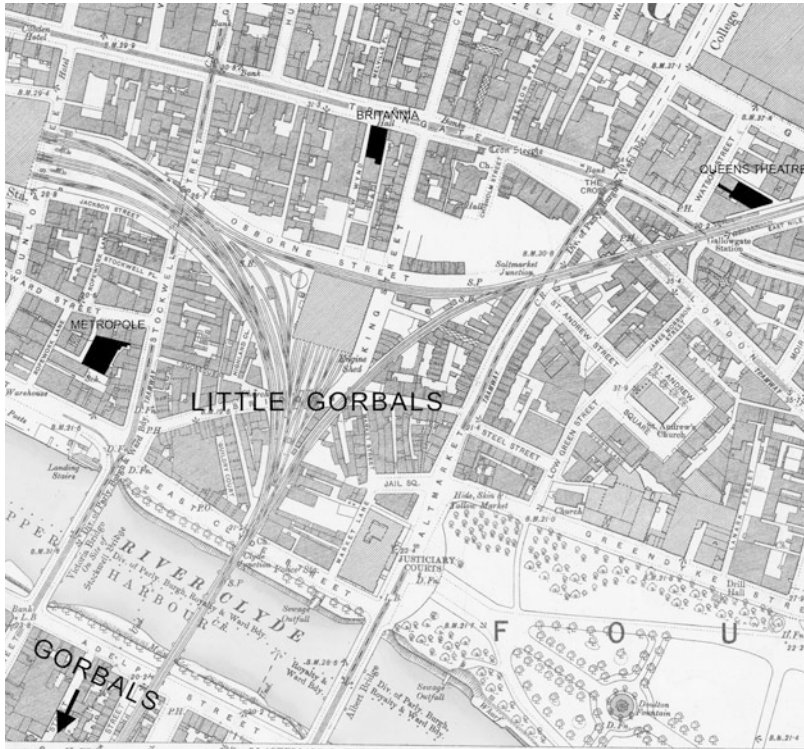
Map 4.1 Map of Trongate, Saltmarket area showing Little Gorbals, 1896. County Series (Ordnance Survey of Lanarkshire). 2nd edition (Image courtesy of the University of Glasgow Library)

which beset these ethnic stereotypes was now formalised, in presentations which required that one identity be overlaid with another, or given an unexpected humorous twist.

'Ike Freedman, The Scottish Hebrew Gentleman'

To explore these new composite characterisations, and some practical examples of the Irish and Jewish stage representations discussed, in the last section of this chapter I will examine the career of the Glasgow Jewish comedian, Ike Freedman (1895–1960). An iconic figure in Glasgow variety in the 1930s and 1940s, Freedman encapsulated many

of the themes of hybridity that have emerged in this chapter. On a personal level, his life embodied the classic Scottish immigrant experience, from arrival in the Gorbals as a boy, to early success and subsequent assimilation, a journey that mirrored that of many in the Jewish community. His professional career, begun shortly after the First World War, similarly encompassed the development of the Jewish comedian, from beginnings performing as a stock Hebrew comic, through the addition of characters which combined and juxtaposed other ethnic identities, to a modern, socially transfigured version of Jewish identity that was very much his own.

Born Isaac Solomon in Wigan in 1895, Freedman was the youngest of three sons of a tailor and his wife, who had come to Britain from Grodna in Belarus. Around 1900 the family moved to Glasgow, where they stayed in the Gorbals and found work tailoring. There are no family stories of how Ike first came to go on the stage, or of when he changed his name. However engagement diaries in his family's possession suggest that, after appearing in concerts and at the Paragon cinema in the Gorbals in 1920, he made his professional debut at the Olympia Bridgeton Cross in December 1921, and by 1922 was working continuously in cinemas and music halls across Glasgow and the west of Scotland. His bookings for 1922 include appearances in the Gorbals at Greens and the Palace, and three separate week's engagements at the Tron Cinema, the (briefly) renamed Panopticon, still under Pickard's management, which continued to offer variety acts in between films.

By the mid-1920s Freedman was working throughout Britain, mostly in the touring revues which were the stock in trade for variety performers. By the late 1920s he was increasingly well-known throughout Scottish music hall and, on a localised level within Glasgow, a rising star. In November 1932 he recorded six songs from his repertoire for Beltona Records in the ballroom of the Music Hall in Aberdeen, and the following year recorded a further six records, issued on the Regal label, in a session at Glasgow's McLellan Galleries, accompanied by the Empress Theatre Orchestra. In 1933 Freedman travelled to New York to play six weeks of vaudeville for the Radio-Keith-Orpheum circuit, at a weekly salary of $200. During his transatlantic passage aboard the SS *Transylvania*, he appeared in a shipboard concert chaired by Sir Harry Lauder. The 1930s also saw him begin broadcasting on radio, initially in spots on variety programmes from Glasgow such as 'Wait till I tell ye', and 'Silver Sporran', before graduating to 'Happidrome', broadcast from London from the Paris Cinema in Regent Street. Freedman also appeared in summer concert parties, in

three-month seasons at Leven (1927), Saltcoats (1928) and Portabello (1931). And in partnership with a performing colleague, Tommy Hope, he also went into management, presenting a series of touring revues, and securing the council contract for summer season at Leven. Freedman's performing career came to a premature end in the early 1950s, when, following the amputation of a leg in 1953, he retired to Rothesay to run a guest house. There he continued to appear at the town's Winter Gardens, before dying of a heart attack in 1960.

Freedman's career is particularly interesting on two counts. First because he was, in a manner perhaps unique to Glasgow, an example of a music hall star of a very localised kind. He began his career in the numerous small variety theatres and cinemas that presented live acts between films. But he reached the height of his success in Glasgow in the 1930s and 1940s, where he was associated with two venues in particular: the Empress Playhouse in St George's Cross, and the Metropole in Stockwell Street, managed by the Frutin family. Freedman was therefore of a type of performer who was acutely attuned to and reflective of his audience. Although his career took him further afield—to New York, Belfast, Dublin, and most of the larger provincial and London variety theatres—it was in this local context, in front of Glasgow audiences, and within walking distance of the area where he grew up, that his material best resonated.

Second, Freedman was a Hebrew comedian, from a Glasgow Jewish upbringing, who developed his act to encompass other ethnic characterisations within his repertoire of songs and patter. He subsequently developed and fused these characterisations in such a way as to invert the prejudices which some saw as pertaining to them.

At the outset of his career Freedman performed a Hebrew comedian's act, such as described by Samm Hankin earlier in this chapter. In an oral history interview recorded at the Panopticon, Chris Lee, who visited the hall frequently as a boy, vividly recalled seeing Freedman there in the early 1930s:

> One particular turn I remember was a man who came on and he was carrying a suitcase, and he gave you the impression the suitcase was very heavy, and his face was all blacked up as if it was a full beard, and he sang a song, I think it was 'Only a Jew,' and he would come on singing 'Only a Jew,' and give a few experiences and gags and so forth, and so on, and then trumble off singing 'Only a Jew' again. … I heard later, and I can't confirm this, I heard he was Ike Freeman [*sic*], who became quite a thing around the Glasgow theatres …[47]

Elaborating on the 'full beard' make-up, he explained that it was painted on 'as if it was blacked up, like Groucho Marx', but to imitate a full beard ('down the sides, below the nose'). The performer's costume comprised 'a tail coat, and trousers [that] were obviously too long, and a bowler hat'. Asked what the implication of the costume and make-up was, he stated 'this was the popular impression of a Jew'.[48] The bowler hat, swallow-tail coat and baggy trousers were all standard features of the Julian Rose-style Hebrew comic characterisation. The stage business with the heavy suitcase suggests the character was meant to be a Jewish commercial traveller or peddler, such as the 'Trebblers' that David Daiches describes.

This Panopticon performance dates from the middle phase of Freedman's career. Although we don't have any details of the act he performed at its outset, music in his collection from this period includes standard Hebrew comic songs such as 'Rachel My Girl', 'Sarah I've Got a Feeling for You', and 'When Reuben comes to Town', songs which display the normal tropes of the genre, including some less attractive aspects. In 'Rachel, My Girl', set on their wedding day, 'Abe' reassures his eponymous girlfriend that now they are finally wed she won't have to carry on worrying him to marry her. But hints at the pressures of immigrant life are present in the suggestion of a second-hand ring ('Rub it on your coat and it wont half shine') and in the reminder that family pressures remain insistent:

> Abe said to Rachel you are my gem
> But tell your family that I don't want them.[49]

In 'Sarah, I've got a Feeling for you!', the protagonist, Abie, having seen how young men's heads turn in the presence of 'Miss Sarah' ('the sweetest little piece of Yiddish candy that I know!'), tries to persuade her to marry him, so that she can attract them into his failing shop.

> Abie said to Sarah, 'When we're married, 'tis true
> Boys will all be making goo-goo eyes, dear, at you.
> Just smile at them, Sarah, when they walk in the door,
> And when they are not looking charge them one shilling more.'

The motive, crudely expressed, is money.

> Chorus
> Sarah, I've got a feeling for you,
> Sarah, I love you so.

You'll make a bus'ness for your Abie, no mistake,
But don't forget the money, baby, I will take.

Even in a broadly comic idiom (the song was American, and originally sung by Gilday and Fox), the Hebrew character's venality is uncomfortable.[50] Another song, 'Oh! Abram take me back to Shoreditch', which has lyrics in dialect, concerns a rich Jewish wife who now lives in Mayfair, but who longs to return to their old East-end haunts to show off their new wealth.

Vouldn't Missis Rubinstein look at me vid surprise
Ven she sees the diamonds von't she open up her eyes.

But beyond the material trappings is the realisation that they might have been happier with the simple pleasure of their former life.

Chorus:
Oh! Abram take me back to Shoreditch
Shoreditch, Vhere ve got from poor to rich
Vot does de money matter, or the diamonds dat ve vear?
Everybody's got them here so no one wants to stare
Oh, Abram take me back to Shoreditch
Plenty of honour and glory ve vill gain
Ve vill be upon de scene as a Yidishe King and Queen
Abram take me back to Petticoat Lane![51]

If this was Freedman's early repertoire, he subsequently developed a number of different styles. In addition to Hebrew comic material, he also became known for a type of song that addressed the plight of Judaism with a direct sentimental appeal. 'Only a Jew' (Fig. 4.4), the song which became his signature, traces the lot of the individual Jew, who roams the world, stateless, with 'Never a welcome wher'ere I may stray / And there's no land I can call my own.' Asking why he should have to suffer so much prejudice, when he's 'got a heart and a soul just like you', his exhortation reaches its climax in the chorus, when the Jew/immigrant/outsider's plea for compassion is delivered in controlled but highly emotive terms:

Why do they say that I'm only a Jew
And despise me because of my breed?
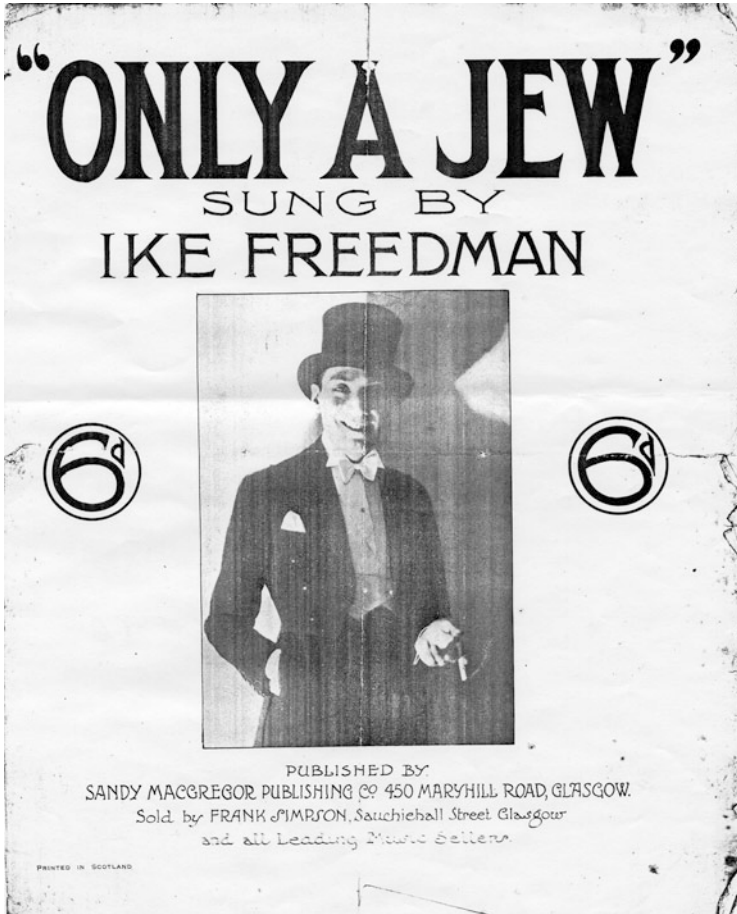
Fig. 4.4 Sheet music, '"Only a Jew", sung by Ike Freedman'. Sandy Macgregor Publishing, Maryhill Road, Glasgow (By kind permission of Trudy Turnbull (Solomon))

Gentile or Jew they are both just the same
Though they may have a different creed.
I've got a dad with a heart pure as gold
And a mother with love so divine
So why do they say that I'm only a Jew
when I'm one of god's own mankind.

The song's final resort, transcending even its universal humanitarian appeal, is to invoke the vindication of his parents' love. Robert Snyder has written of the special place of maternal love in Jewish culture, both within Jewish family life and in other societies' perceptions of it. He cites as an example Sophie Tucker's singing of 'My Yiddishe Mama', a song which was powerfully emotional when sung in English, but gained an extra dimension in Yiddish, when it 'spoke more directly about assimilation and guilt at leaving aged parents': the subtext is the singer's parting from her mother through the generational shift away from the ghetto, where the mother has remained, to the family's guilt.[52] In other words, to the Yiddish-speaking audience the song reveals a specific cultural memory which lends it special resonance. Although sung in English, Freedman's intense, plangent delivery of 'Only a Jew', evident from his recording, may have had something of that dual quality of resonance.[53]

That 'Only a Jew' had a special role as the core of Freedman's act was confirmed by the fact that he had a second song, 'Just a Jew', with which he alternated it, and which fulfilled almost exactly the same emotive function. (The chorus ran: 'Just a Jew! Just a Jew! With a heart and a soul just like you').[54] Freedman always sang one or the other as the climax of his performance.

Throughout his career Freedman's act remained essentially that of a Hebrew comedian. However much he overlaid it with other ethnic characters, the underlying sensibility and default persona was Jewish, and rooted in the conventions of the Hebrew genre. This meant that his songs and jokes were populated with characters called Ikey, Mikey, Solly, Abraham, Abie Cohen and Goldstein, and that he maintained his (Glasgow) Jewish accent, which he modulated according to the requirements of the song. We know this because in several recordings he assumes the clipped Semitic tones of an older Jewish character. He also continued to use a dialect accent for at least part of his performance until well into the 1930s, judging from press references to his 'Yiddish ditties' and 'Levinsky exploits'.

However, if his Jewish sensibility was a constant, much of Freedman's act revolved around other ethnic characterisations, both singly and in combinations.

In the first place, Italian characters featured prominently in his repertoire, Freedman's recordings of 'Romeo' and 'My Queen of Italy' revealing his ethnic Italian stereotype to have been just as simplistically drawn as his Hebrew 'Abie Cohen'. The Italian protagonists in these songs are unmistakably derived from the urban immigrant workers familiar to the

public as musicians and street vendors. They sell ice cream (pronounced 'ice-a-cream'), play the accordion, have organs and monkeys, and long to return home 'across-a-da sea' to Italy, where a faithful sweetheart, usually named Marie, awaits. In 'My Queen of Italy', Toni dreams about:

> My sweetest Susanno, from old Milano
> She is my queen of Italy.
> Since I've been away, she yearns for me each day
> And says come back, come back-a to me, Toni.
> When I make-a da money, back home ma honey
> I'll take-a da trip, across-a de ocean blue.
> No more I'll be a Romeo,
> but buy a farm and reap and sow,
> And do-a ma best to raise-a da family.[55]

The prospect of hard work rewarded by a return home to marriage and security was an aspiration with which many could identify. But the Italian character also carried an erotic charge, an intimation of hot blood and carnality. The subtext of the stage Italian was a vehicle for libido. In a song of the same name, the eponymous Romeo similarly plans that, when he has made his fortune ('plenty of dough'), he will return home.

> To my Marie, who waits for me,
> And very soon a honeymoon there'll be.
> I'll give her a kiss and I'll give her a squeeze
> And everything else will be go as you please
> With Romeo from Italy.[56]

'Go as you please' (meaning 'free for all') here alludes to the untrammelled sexual favours of the honeymoon to come, an unusually explicit reference to enjoyment of sex. (In Freedman's recording the song pauses dramatically after the phrase, as if to allow for a sharp intake of breath.) The theme of languorous, permissive Mediterranean sexuality also resonates through Irving Berlin's 'Sweet Italian Love', a set of hand-copied band parts for which exist amongst Freedman's music, and which reinforces the atmosphere of easy sensuality:

> Sweet Italian love
> Nice Italian love
> You don't need the moon-a-light your love to tell her
> In da house or on da roof or in da cellar.[57]

Libidinous appetites also extended to latin women, who were depicted as unpredictable and exciting, but formidable if betrayed. In 'Romeo', Marie warns her lover what will happen if he strays while he is away abroad:

> If you should make-a da flirt
> With another bit of skirt
> You can bet-o I'll grasp my stiletto
> And I'll stab-a you where it hurts.

Freedman's performance of these songs—in a vocal style as much Al Jolson as Chico Marx—was accompanied by the ethnic Italian stage costume of the time: a coloured pencil drawing shows him dressed gondolier-style in straw boater and striped matelot shirt, all flashing eyes and earring.

The ascribing of a seething, Mediterranean sensuality to Italian characters was no doubt a strong imaginative handle on Italian identity in this stage context, even if, to Italian immigrants to Glasgow, working long hours in fish shops and cafes, or selling ice cream and chestnuts in city centre streets, it must have seemed as remote from reality as most of music hall's other ethnic imaginings.

In addition to Italian songs, Freedman was also known for others which combined or simultaneously played off a range of national or ethnic identities. In 'The Irish Italian Jew', he takes his stock impersonation several stages further by singing about an Italian who goes to Ireland to make his fortune selling ice cream, only to fall in love with an Irish girl. When, in their attempts at a cultural compromise, she proves unable to live as the Italian wife he envisaged ('she'd rather keep a donkey, than be bothered with her monkey'), Antonio is forced to become an Irishman instead. However the joke is given a further twist by the fact that the song's narrative voice—and it's not entirely clear whether this is the protagonist, Antonio Ferraro, or the singer/narrator—is subtly but clearly Jewish. And in the telling of the story Jewish or Yiddish words and inflections are employed to slyly subvert the hackneyed conventions of Irish and Italian stage identities. So the object of Antonio's affections, 'dainty Nancy Morgan', is described as 'a pretty little *Irisher* colleen'; and he woos Nancy with the promise that (lapsing into a Faginesque Glasgow-Jewish voice on the recording) ['He']'ll give [her] plenfra' money', if she'll agree to be his.

In contrast, 'My Yiddisher Irish Girl' has Freedman in 'Hebrew' voice from the start, as Solomon Cohen, who also falls for an Irish 'goirl'. But

when they marry, and the question arises of where to settle, Solomon wants to live in Ireland, the reason being:

> For it's the last place the devil would look to find a Hebrew
> So I'm going to live on Erin's isle.

The comic incongruity of the notion in cultural terms—Ike obviously standing out like a sore thumb in the stage Ireland being depicted—is emphasised and exaggerated by the Jewishness of the delivery. In the middle section of the recording Freedman, breaking off from the song for a burst of patter, further underlines the one-joke theme by opening 'You know, customers, I always like to tell you a story about my own nationality—the Irish.'

This Irish-Jewish comic trope surfaces again in 'Ballymoney', an almost identical reworking of the formula, in which the Jewish character, here Goldstein, falls in love with an Irish girl, with the twist that this time, when the prospect of living in Ireland arises, the comic litany of possibly Irish towns are all dismissed by him as unsuitable, with a single exception.

> But it may seem funny, we'll go to Ballymoney
> Because we like the name of money, Yoi, Yoi.[58]

These mixed-marriage scenarios that Freedman developed so effectively may well have reflected an imported influence. The eroticisation of inter-racial relationships was a key theme of vaudeville in America, where Erdman suggests 'an interest in the ramifications of Jewish-gentile romance emerges as a near obsessive concern in performances with Jewish characters'.[59] Irish-Jewish relationships, and the working through of their comic incongruities, were particularly popular, as in songs like 'Yiddisha Luck and Irisher Love' (1911), 'My Yiddisha Colleen' (1910) and 'There's a Little Bit of Irish in Sadie Cohen' (1916).[60] (Freedman himself married an Irish woman, a former circus trapeze artist twenty seven years his junior.)

To these overlapping Italian, Jewish and Irish characterisations, Freedman added another, perhaps the one with most shared resonances to the Jewish stereotype: the Aberdonian Jew, a concept which may well have tapped into an existing strain of Aberdeen/Jewish jokes. Certainly a joke book issued by the Dundee publishers Valentine, which offered a range of such pamphlets, celebrated a mythic Aberdeen Jew, Isaac Levi, as a pretext to relate a long litany of Hebrew jokes. (While many pertained to the

meanness of Aberdonians and Jews, others riffed on Jewish and Scottish cultural identity, with puns on 'Roderick *Jew*' and punch lines such as 'And Isaac lifted up his eyes and behold, the Campbells were coming')[61] In 'Ikey Granitestein from Aberdeen', sung in Freedman's best pawky Scots-Jewish, the central character achieves notoriety as 'the meanest man that I have ever seen' by being both Jewish *and* Aberdonian, the jaunty chorus combining one of Freedman's craftiest rhymes.

> Ikey Granitestein from Aberdeen.
> He's the meanest man that you have ever seen.
> He would pinch your tie and collar,
> Do you for a dollar.
> Watch a baby cut its teeth and try and steal the molar.
> Ikey Granitestein from Aberdeen.
> Oy yoy, yoy, yoy, he was mean!
> On Resurrection morn he'd pinch old Gabrel's horn,
> Would Ikey Granitestein from Aberdeen.[62]

The final development of Freedman's act concerns the evolving sophistication of his Jewish stage persona. Although Irish and Italian characterisations were central to his repertoire, Freedman's generic billing always remained 'Hebrew comedian', as which he was specified on contracts, with the exceptions of some where he was termed 'character comedian', or, on a couple of occasions, 'Hebrew and Italian comedian'. But by the early 1930s, he had switched to appearing in white tie, top hat and tails, and billing himself as 'The Scottish Hebrew Gentleman' (Fig. 4.5). The change marked a statement of intent. The old Hebrew comic's shabby outfit had long been superseded, and evening dress was regularly worn by the companies of touring roadshows and revues. But the notion of a Hebrew comedian appearing as such in white tie, with a cigarette holder and spats, represented a further subversion of genre expectation.

The effect, cosmopolitan and a little provocative, was made possible by the fact that Freedman was evidently an expert and versatile performer, who offered nuanced characterisations more fitted to cabaret than to music hall. In a rare London appearance at the Metropolitan, Edgware Road, known as the 'Met', in 1935, the *Era* critic was quick to discern his originality, commenting:

> Hebrew comedians very often jar on me, but Ike Freedman is different. He makes one sit up at the outset by coming on in neat evening dress, and,

Fig. 4.5 Ike Freedman (1895–1960), 'The Scottish Hebrew Gentleman' and partner, believed to be Dot Kaye, c.1932 (By kind permission of Trudy Turnbull (Solomon))

having thus broken all conventions in this style of act, gets over some really excellent Hebrew jests, enlivened by a fine personality.[63]

What this new urbanity meant is difficult to judge from our perspective. Did the smart modern presentation change the implication of the Hebrew act, subverting the older impoverished Jewish comedic stereotype with a

new empowering resonance? Look how far we've come? Was 'Only a Jew' really sung in white tie? Or did its performance strip away any remaining relevance to stage material rooted in, at whatever remove, immigrant experience?

And what, in the wider cultural sense, was the nature and impact of the ethnic stage representations so far described? Did they mark a stage of assimilation, or did the crude, reductive and often negative characterisations they offered constitute only the most grudging of acknowledgements on the part of the host culture?

It may be overstating the case to say that Freedman was anticipating multiculturalism in the sense that we know it. But his presentation of ethnic stereotypes, by combining them into hybridised composites—Irish Jew, Italian Irishman, Irish-Italian Jew—represented a sophisticated play on ethnic personae, that went beyond their stock identities to make a feature of their banality. By appealing to the Glasgow audience's sophisticated ability to 'read' such characters, he was inviting them to share in the joke. In the reductive cartoon world of his song lyrics, where for an Italian to 'become' Irish involves he 'stop eatin dissa macaroni' and 'have Irish stew for dinner every night', the cultural exclusivity of the imagery gets progressively harder to sustain as the absurdity of the comic edifice piles up. By pointing up the ludicrousness of such rigidly defined cultural stereotypes, Freedman was forcing the audience to confront, and laugh at, the sheer ridiculousness of seeing people, and the world, in these reductive terms.

As if to underline the point, Freedman's song 'The Yiddisher Italian', surviving in draft form in a letter from the writer Billy Rea, offers the ultimate example of such overreaching, in a story which seemingly strives to combine every known Italian and Jewish character trope in a single scenario. In the song, Solly goes for a holiday to 'sunny Italy', and meeting a signorita ('she was sweeta'), suggests that she returns home with him to 'start a Tally pawn shop and sell Yiddish Ice-a-cream'. Following the wedding, 'a swell affair' ('The Tonios and Romeos / The Abes and Ikes were there'), all goes well until the new bride, 'Mrs Solly Mussolini Isaacstein', starts insulting the customers, and confusing requests to redeem pledges with orders for fish and chips. When the relationship fails along with the business, Solly ruefully concludes:

> it is my fault. I was foolish not to see.
> That ice-a-cream and fish and chips
> With Kosher don't agree.

But the failure seems to reflect not so much genuine racial incompatibility, as the comically exhaustive burden of enumerating all the facets of their representative stereotypes, from Ikey's 'shop with three brass balls', to his wife's reflex shout of 'Two fish and chip and plenty mucha—"squirt"'.[64]

In concluding, ethnic music hall performances contributed to the shaping of social attitudes in cities like Glasgow, most importantly by offering a popular version of ethnic identities that went some way to engaging the groups involved in a dialogue with indigenous Scottish audiences. The representations might have been contentious and caricatured, but they at least initiated a discourse.

Ethnic performances also exercised a socialising influence by introducing—admittedly residually, through humour, and usually at their own expense—aspects of immigrant groups' cultural and religious practices. In this, 'performance both symbolise[d] and embodie[d] the very process of acculturation'.[65] While Hebrew material generally revolved around negative themes —avariciousness, meanness, and attempts to cheat customers—sketches like 'Levinsky at the Wedding' also alluded to extended family relationships, and a social world beyond 'business'. At a time at which relations with 'alien' Jews were often strained, as in the 1909 dispute over street trading in Clyde Street, the humanising effect of such material should not be underestimated. Sketches on religious themes could also help to explain the historic background to Jewish immigration. In one 'scena' the Hebrew Comic Gus Harris played a rabbi who, apprehending a boy throwing a stone at his synagogue window, reproves him with a song entitled 'Whether a Jew or a Gentile', which outlined the brutality of the pogroms, and the reasons why Jews fled Russian persecution.[66] Given widespread public ignorance and misinformation on these matters, the inclusion of this sort of information in popular form—in a couple of lines in a sentimental song—may have significantly contributed to reframing Jewish immigrants' experience for those in the audience.

If these were advantages that representations might bring to relations with wider society, the obverse aspect was how the communities being represented felt about the version of their culture projected in music hall. In fact, for all that representations were often crudely-drawn and offensive, their benefits were more evenly distributed than might at first seem apparent. Although stage representations were essentially geared towards the amusement of the (majority) indigenous Scottish audience, culturally speaking there was also something in them for the subjects of the representation. At the very least, the communities depicted gained an acknowledgement

that they had arrived, and a cultural profile or self-image that located them within urban society. If the image was derogatory to some degree, so were most of the other ethnic figures that populated music hall's racial gallery. In fact, the problem for those wishing to dismiss music hall's ethnic representations is that, as with the Scotch Comic figure, they were also demonstrably reflexive in their appeal: just as Harry Lauder was not just an English figment, but was also undeniably popular with Scottish audiences, so Jews in Glasgow attended music halls, and supported Jewish comedians. A report of the Hebrew comic Charles Cohen's 1918 appearance at the Coliseum—situated at the edge of the Gorbals—stated that 'the greatest admirers of this quaint comedian are of the race at which he so persistently pokes good humoured fun'.[67] (At the same time some performers from Jewish backgrounds chose to eschew the Hebrew character and embrace the tartan comic persona: So the well-known Scotch comedian Jock Mackay, shown in photographs wearing the kilt and carrying bagpipes, was born Max Kuttner in Glasgow in 1879, one of five children of William Kuttner, a traveller in jewellery, and Clara Brach, who probably came from Witkowo in Prussia, now Poland.[68])

Ethnic performers could also serve as a focus for national political and cultural aims. This was particularly the case with Irish performers, particularly 'patriotic' comedians of the 1880s like Pat Rooney and Pat Feeney who became famous for songs which addressed questions like Irish Home Rule. Feeney himself was acutely nationalist in outlook, combining shamelessly sentimental material with other songs which were stridently political. His iconic status in British Irish circles was evident from the seismic reactions to his death, when memorial concerts were held and his funeral was nationally reported. The fact that star Irish performers could become the focal point of national aspirations, and important advocates and figureheads for their immigrant communities, confirms the prominence of music hall as a medium within Scottish and British Irish culture. More fundamentally, it also confirms that Irish stage representations had intrinsic value for the expatriate British Irish community.

The diasporic aspect of these representations was significant for both Jewish and Irish communities, although in quite different ways. For the Irish, music hall performers, songs and performing material represented a natural conduit for the promotion of a shared Irish cultural identity between the centres of the diaspora, and particularly with those in America. The fact that Irish representations often descended to sentimental parody was a trade-off against their cultural utility in providing

a reference point for the Irish community in Britain, and for this wider diasporic role. However the presence of Irish immigrants in audiences in Glasgow and other Irish centres may also have helped prevent acts from straying too far from a cultural self-image which was at least acceptable to expatriate sensibilities.

In contrast, the Hebrew comic figure that emerged fully-formed at the turn of the century seemed like an outside imposition, and was contentious with sections of Jewish society. In time, Glasgow's Jewish community came to embrace music hall, both professionally, as the Frutin family became leading purveyors of Scottish variety and pantomime, and through its own social activities, which by the 1920s included variety performances alongside traditional entertainments. But it did so on distinctly different terms which, unlike the Irish, were more connected to the need to embrace the host society's cultural values as part of the process of social integration rather than as a means of expressing Jewish identity. For similarly pragmatic reasons Yiddish-speaking culture did not renew itself far into the twentieth century. Yiddish Theatre was still available in Glasgow up to the 1930s, with companies from London playing seasons at the Princess's Theatre in the Gorbals, and amateur productions at the British Legion in Stockwell Street. There was also some interaction between music hall and the Yiddish vaudeville tradition (a 'Yiddish & English Variety Entertainment' in 1931 included a 'new song', 'Ich Bin A Bocher Fun Die Gorbals'[69]). But there was never any question of Yiddish theatre competing with indigenous entertainments. As with Jewish-American comedians, Glasgow Jewish performers like Ike Freedman and the comics Peel and Curtis anglicised their names and aimed for careers in mainstream variety. Perhaps as a reaction to the retrograde East-European connotations of the initial Hebrew act, such performers were often associated with modernity and contemporary fashions. Freedman's own urbane cosmopolitan persona reflected this post-*Jazz Singer* world.

By the 1920s Scottish audiences, long familiar with music hall's range of ethnic characterisations, had become adept at reading their formalised characteristics, and with the notion of difference denoted by their interplay. In response, a growing playfulness began to enter into performers' deployment of ethnic stereotypes, whose 'racial' characteristics and traits were increasingly juxtaposed in ways that played on the audience's knowingness. In Glasgow, the exemplar of this second phase of ethnic characterisations was Ike Freedman. Freedman's development of the Scottish Hebrew performance from its dialect origins to

the transcendent, cosmopolitan modernity of his final post-war incarnation marks an extraordinary journey, one that sets him alongside such other survivors of the same tradition as the Jewish vaudevillian Leo Fuchs, the 'Yiddish Fred Astaire', and Yiddish singing star Leo Fuld. Indeed, set alongside Fuld's haunting recording of 'Wo Ahin Soll Ich Geh'n' (Tell Me Where Shall I Go?), the great anthem of Jewish post-war displacement, 'Only A Jew' seems an equally authentic expression of diasporic longing.[70]

The juxtaposition of Irish and Jewish characters in which Freedman specialised was perpetuated in films of the 1920s and 30s. In Glasgow, comedies like 'The Cohens and the Kellys' series (1926–33) and their sequel 'Clancy's Kosher Wedding' (1927), which revolved around Jewish/Irish family rivalries, were enormously popular with both communities. At the same time intermarriage was a sensational theme in films like 'The Jew', 'the love story of a Gentile and a pretty Jewish girl …' which, playing in the Gorbals, was 'certain to create quite a stir in a district where reside both sections'. These storylines also offered some scope for acculturation, if with well-intentioned approximation. At a Glasgow screening of one such inter-racial love story, when the Irish hero attended his father's deathbed the cinema orchestra played 'Kol-Nidrei', the sacred music played before Yom Kippur.[71]

Of course, the premise that ethnic stage representations helped create and frame national consciousness worked both ways: just as Hebrew comedians were trying to provide a version of their identity to fit their new environment, so immigrants were themselves absorbing images of Scottish culture from Scotch comics and the National Drama. David Daiches, a rabbi's son who grew up in Edinburgh, recalled that as a boy his first image of the Highlands—of 'painted mountains and lochs and waterfalls'— came from a stage set for 'Rob Roy'. (When he later visited them he realised 'it was all quite accurate'.[72]) While such anecdotes might sound slight and dismissable, these sorts of emotive impressions and associations are exactly what come together to form ideas of complex cultural identity. Daiches wrote of his own sense of cultural identity that, in growing up, 'pride in Jewish history … existed side by side with my attitude to Scotland', and that 'bagpipe music and synagogue melody represented the two poles between which my sensibility moved'.[73] The actor Edith Ruddick's Latvian mother, who greatly admired Burns poetry, was similarly fond of quoting 'Wir sind doch alle Jock Tamson's bairns.'[74] Ironically, the most tartan of all Glasgow's variety shows, which prominently featured kilts,

bagpipes and bands, were those mounted at the Metropole in Stockwell Street by the Frutin Family. In a recorded interview, Alex Frutin explained that 'the Metropole became very, very famous for Scottish shows', and that, although the public 'called them pantomime', which he didn't agree with, he was happy to acquiesce with their preferences.

As this last point illustrates, although I have concentrated on performers and stage genres, the other factor that influenced the context in which ethnic representations and their presentation developed was the nature of music hall as a commercial entertainment form. As an inclusive popular entertainment, music hall acted as a forcing house for 'shotgun' urban integration, of the rapid kind that was required in certain stages of industrial social development. For immigrant groups brought together in overcrowded urban conditions, competing for work and living space with often hostile indigenous populations, it offered a forum for the working-through of racial tensions and antagonisms. As an entertainment then, it dealt in edgy, sometimes barbed humour which allowed audiences to laugh at the expense of incoming immigrant groups. But by the same token, it was not an unsupervised bear-pit in which prejudice was given free rein. Fights and confrontations within the auditorium itself were anathema: they disrupted the performance, caused problems with the police and licensing authorities and were bad for business. The technique was rather to vent strong feelings through laughter and move on. So although ethnic humour often involved laughing at, rather than with, the subject, within a performance the focus of the humiliation was kept moving—from Irish comic, to blackface minstrel, to Scotch comic, to Hebrew comedian—in a way that dispelled the notion of discrimination attaching to any one group, and reinforced the sense of the audience as a collective whole.

In this, the Panopticon's operation closely resembled that of New York's small-time vaudeville houses. These neighbourhood theatres (which like the Panopticon offered four or five shows daily), similarly relied on a highly localised clientele, and, because of this, ensured that no single ethnic group was allowed to predominate in audiences, which were always treated as a single—American—entity. The practice reflected the pragmatic commercial imperative to conserve the audience as a coherent body as a way of prolonging its identification with the venue. However as geographical and territorial factors inevitably influenced the composition of local audiences, the significance of appearances by ethnic acts may have been in inverse proportion to their frequency at the hall in question. Jewish performers were relatively rare at the Panopticon, which represented a

venue at the marginal limits of the catchment of the Little Gorbals. If we accept Erdman's suggestion that 'performance both symbolizes and embodies the very process of acculturation', occurrences like the appearance of Slippinski and Slippofski, 'Yiddish comedians' at the Panopticon in February 1915 may have represented a significant example of cultural interaction. So too did Freedman's own career, whose local popularity at one stage led to stage competitions with prizes for the best impersonation of his act. It also produced a rare endorsement from the community newspaper, the *Jewish Echo*, in 1929, stating that Freedman 'had done more than any other Jewish performer to familiarise the people of Scotland with the finer points of the Jewish character'.[75]

Music hall then offered a mechanism for cultural exchange or acculturation, in which groups learnt about one another, in what amounted to a process of cultural familiarisation, but as importantly, about the principal of difference and of toleration: as Erdman puts it, 'a … cultural preoccupation not so much with realities as with possibilities'. While this had an important socialising function, it was exercised through the working of a commercial entertainment genre, music hall, which in several respects neutered the quality of the exchange. The key social and cultural discourse of late nineteenth-century social development was circumscribed and commodified to fit the commercial imperatives of the format, music hall, which was pioneering the development of the mass leisure industry that was to follow.

Notes

1. Allan Junior, *The Aberdeen Jew* (Dundee and London: Valentine, 1927), 12, 33.
2. Peter Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History* (London: Polity, 1997), 196.
3. Suzanne Audrey, *Multiculturalism in Practice: Irish, Jewish, Italian and Pakistani migration to Scotland* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 46–7; Kenneth E. Collins, *Second City Jewry: The Jews of Glasgow in the Age of Expansion, 1790–1919* (Glasgow: Scottish Jewish Archives, 1990).
4. Mencken wrote 'Potash and Perlmutter still insist that the papers they support refer to them as Hebrews, and the thing is docilely done. In the vaudeville journal, *Variety*, which is owned and edited by a Jew, Hebrew is invariably used. I have often observed references to Hebrew comedians, Hebrew tragedians, the Hebrew drama, the Hebrew holidays and even the Hebrew church'; H.L. Mencken, *The American Language: an inquiry into the development of English in the United States*, 3rd ed. (New York: Knopf, 1930), 147–48.

5. Linda Mackenney, interview with Samm Hankin, Scottish Theatre Archive, STA Tape 48.

6. Douglas Gilbert, *American Vaudeville*: *Its Life and Times* (New York: Dover, 1940), 290–91. For a typical variation, see Harry L. Newton's 'Abie Cohen's Wedding Day', in Newton, *Some Vaudeville Monologues* (Minneapolis, 1917), reprinted in *From Travelling Show to Vaudeville*: *Theatrical Spectacle in America*, *1830–1910*, ed. Robert *M. Lewis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2003): 347–49.

7. Gilbert, *American Vaudeville*, 287; Harley Erdman, *Staging the Jew*: *The Performance of an American Ethnicity*, *1860–1920* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

8. In this vein the chorus of Frank Bush's song about Solomon Moses, a 'bully Sheeny man' who deals in used clothes, ran 'Solomon, Solomon Moses / Hast su gesehen der clotheses? / Hast du gesehen der kleiner kinder / Und der sox iss in der vinder?'; quoted in Gilbert, *American Vaudeville*, 287–92.

9. *Jewish Chronicle*, 14 Feb. 1908, 24.

10. *Jewish Chronicle*, 3 Nov.1911, 33.

11. *Jewish Chronicle*, 10 Nov. 1911, 34.

12. *Jewish Chronicle*, 24 Nov. 1911, 37.

13. At Leeds in 1913, in one of a series of reactions against offensive comedians, Jews in the audience at the Hippodrome hissed a comic for 'putting his hands up in caricature of a Jew': *Jewish Chronicle*, 16 May 1913, 21.

14. David Daiches, *Two Worlds*: *An Edinburgh Jewish childhood*, orig pub. Harcourt Brace, 1956 (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1987), 117–20.

15. See Kenneth Collins, *Second City Jewry*, 71; also *Glasgow Jewry*: *A Guide to the History and Community of the Jews in Glasgow* (1990), 5.

16. Erdman, *Staging the Jew*, 25.

17. *The Professional and Authors' Journal*, week ending 6 Feb. 1886.

18. *Eagle*, 7 Jan. 1909, 8, 10.

19. *Eagle*, 29 Apr. 1909, 10–11. An item on a Jewish MP's appointment to the Cabinet concluded 'Let us give the devil his Jew'; and a story about a Polish Jew coming up before an Acting Assistant recorder in Leeds, and being asked to state his nationality, had him remarking 'Prisoner (with a pronounced Yiddish accent)—I'm a Scotsman, born in Edinburgh (laughter).' *Eagle* 1 Jul. 1909, 4; 14 Jan. 1909, 3.

20. *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 Jan. 1914, 24.

21. *Jewish Chronicle*, 2 Apr. 1920, 30; *Entertainer*, 11 Dec. 1915, 3.

22. *Entertainer*, 8 Apr. 1916, 3. For Potash and Perlmutter, *Play Pictorial*, no. 147, vol. XXIV.

23. *Entertainer*, 8 Apr. 1916, 5.

24. *Entertainer*, 22 Apr. 1916, 4; 13 May 1916, 4; 21 Feb. 1914, 4; 24 Jan. 1914, 4.

25. *Entertainer*, 8 Apr. 1916, 3.
26. *Entertainer*, 22 Apr. 1916, 4.
27. *Eagle*, 8 Apr. 1909, 13.
28. Ben Braber, *Jews in Glasgow 1879–1939. Immigration and Integration* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2007), 23–30.
29. New York's Jewish population of 80,000 in 1880 had risen to 1,250,000 by 1910. Lawrence J. Epstein, *The Haunted Smile*: *The Story of Jewish Comedians* (Oxford: Public Affairs, 2002), 11.
30. Snyder, *The Voice of the City*, 110.
31. Erdman, *Staging the Jew*, 5.
32. Epstein, *The Haunted Smile*, 105.
33. Lawrence E. Mintz, 'Humour and Ethnic Stereotypes in Vaudeville and Burlesque', *Melus*, 21:4 (Winter 1996),19–28, here 24.
34. Christie Davies, 'Jewish Jokes, Anti-Semitic Jokes and Hebredonian Jokes', in *Jewish Humour*, ed. Avner Ziv (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University/Papyrus, 1986), 75–96.
35. Christie Davies, *Ethnic Humour Around the World: A Comparative Analysis* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 124–26.
36. Paul Antonie Distler, 'Exit the Racial Comics', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 13:3 (October 1966), 247–54, here 254. Also Distler, 'The Rise and Fall of the Racial Comics in American Vaudeville', unpublished PhD Dissertation, Tulane University, 1963, 65–8, 179–81.
37. The *Philadelphia Record*, 22 Dec. 1912; quoted in Distler, 'The Rise and Fall of the Racial Comics in American Vaudeville', 64.
38. Other writers have also suggested a number of other functions for such ethnic and racial representations: that they set boundaries for normative behaviour, offered comment on tensions surrounding difficulties associated with language acquisition, and offered a method by which indigenous communities' frustrations at immigration could be vented in a means that gave forceful expression without more serious effect. See Lawrence E. Mintz, 'Humor and Ethnic Stereotypes in Vaudeville and Burlesque'.
39. Homi K Bhabha, 'Introduction: narrating the nation', in *Nation and Narration* ed. Bhabha (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 4.
40. At official level the problem may have been compounded by muddled statistics concerning the composition of the alien population at the time of the First World War. However, locally it may have dated from 1887, when a party of Lithuanians arriving in Glengarnock, Ayrshire, and, misidentified in the *Daily Mail* as Poles, were subsequently attacked by Keir Hardie, chairing a miners' meeting, for their 'filthy habits'. John Millar, *The Lithuanians in Scotland* (Colonsay: House of Lochar, 1998), 67.
41. *Clydebank & Renfrew Press*, 1 Aug.1896.
42. Interview with Christopher Lee, 1.7.05.

43. Alasdair Cameron and Adrienne Scullion, 'W.F. Frame and the Scottish Popular Theatre Tradition', in *Scottish Popular Theatre and Entertainment*, ed. Cameron and Scullion (Glasgow: Glasgow University Library, 1996), 39–62. For discussion of the Scotch comic see Ian Brown, 'In Exile from Ourselves? Tartanry, Scottish Popular Theatre, Harry Lauder and Tartan Day', *Études Écossaises*, 10 (2005), 123–41; and Maloney, '"Wha's like us?" Ethnic Representation in Music Hall and Popular Theatre and the Remaking of Urban Scottish Society', in *From Tartan to Tartanry: Scottish Culture, History and Myth*, ed. Ian Brown (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 129–50.

44. *Jewish Chronicle*, Aug. 1, 1913, 31.

45. Glasgow's Jewish population in 1901 was c.6000, of whom 4700 resided in the Gorbals. Sixteen per cent, 700 of this figure, lived north of the river in the 'Little Gorbals' area. Harvey L. Kaplan, *The Gorbals Jewish Community in 1901* (Glasgow: Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, 2006), 7. Kenneth Collins, *Second City Jewry* (Glasgow: Scottish Jewish Archives, 1990), 81–2.

46. See Murdoch Rogers, 'Glasgow Jewry: The history of the city's Jewish community', in *The Complete Odyssey: Voices from Scotland's Recent Past*, ed. Billy Kay (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996): 227–35, here 229–30; Braber, *Jews in Glasgow 1879–1939*, 78–107, here 92–3.

47. Interview with Christopher Lee, 1.7.05.

48. Interview with Christopher Lee, 1.7.05.

49. 'Rachel My Girl', words by Herbert Rule and Thomas McGhee, music by L. Silberman. Anglo-French Music Publisher, 128 Charing Cross Road, London WC2. Solomon family collection.

50. 'Sarah, I've got a feeling for you', Written and composed by Harry Staunton and Donovan Meher. Sung by Gilday and Fox. Copyright 1912, in the United States of America, Francis, Day & Hunter. Solomon family collection.

51. 'Oh! Abram take me back to Shoreditch', written by Gilbert Wells. Sung by Sam Stern. Composed by W.Snell-Robinson. Copyright 1913 by L. Silberman and Sam Stern. Cover note with the music is marked 'Ike Freadman (*sic*), 1919'. Solomon family collection.

52. Snyder, *The Voice of the City*, 118–20. For a fuller dissection of the song see Ted Merwin, *In Their Own Image: New York Jews in Jazz Age Popular Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 54–58.

53. A family story relates that Sophie Tucker, the great Jewish-American singer, wrote to Freedman asking for permission to sing the song, and that Freedman, although hugely flattered, after much soul-searching, turned down her request: the song was his signature.

54. Although the melodies are different, the subject, sentiment and, to a large extent, the lyrics themselves of the song, which Freedman also recorded, are so similar as to raise the question of whether it might have been written to circumvent a copyright problem with the first.

55. 'My Queen of Italy', by Billy Roy, was recorded twice by Ike Freedman: for Beltona in November 1932 (M-14500-); and in September 1933 for Regal (WSC-15-1). I am grateful to Bill Dean-Myatt for supplying discography details.

56. 'Romeo' by Billy Roy, recorded September 1933, WSC-17-1.

57. Irving Berlin, 'Sweet Italian Love', copyright 1910. Band parts in Solomon family collection; lyrics from Snyder, *Voice of the City*, 146.

58. Lyrics from song sheet leaflet, 'Metropole Glasgow', 21 Apr. 1924. Solomon family collection.

59. Erdman, *Staging the Jew*, 120.

60. See William H.A. Williams, '*Twas Only An Irishman's Dream: The Image of Ireland and the Irish in American Popular Song Lyrics, 1800–1920* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 195.

61. Allan Junior, *The Aberdeen Jew* (Dundee: Valentine, 1927), 12, 33. For the full quotations see note 1, and the opening lines of this chapter.

62. Recorded by Beltona Records (M-14499-1).

63. *The Era*, 9 Oct. 1935, 13.

64. The author's accompanying note directs 'At the word "squirt" business with imaginary vinegar bottle and poke of chips.' Letter to Ike Freedman from Billy Rea, 24 Nov. 1931, with 'The Yiddisher Italian, written and composed by Wm. A. Rea.' Solomon family collection.

65. Erdman, *Staging the Jew*, 121.

66. *Jewish Chronicle*, 27 Jan. 1978, 23.

67. *Entertainer*, 27 Jul. 1918, 4.

68. I am grateful to Harvey Kaplan of the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre for this information.

69. *Jewish Echo*, 16 Jan. 1931, 6; 30 Jan. 1931, 5.

70. See Joel Schechter, 'Leo Fuchs Yiddish Vaudevillian', in *Extraordinary Actors: Essays on Popular Performers*, ed. Jane Milling and Martin Banham (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004): 150–63; for Fuld see Linda Grant, 'No More Wandering for Me', *Guardian*, 26 Jul. 2007, G2, 26.

71. *Jewish Echo*, 9 Mar. 1928, 7.

72. David Daiches, *Was: A Pastime from Time Past* (Glasgow: Richard Drew, 1975), 30–1.

73. Daiches, *Two Worlds*, 59–60.

74. Edith Ruddick, *My Mother's Daughter: A Theatrical Autobiography* (Braunton, Devon: Merlin Books, 1995).

75. *Jewish Echo*, 10 May 1929, 8.

Pickard's Panopticon, 1906–1938: Commodification and the Development of Urban Entertainment Culture

In Chapter 2, I suggested that from its opening in 1859 until the 1890s, the Britannia functioned as a commercial music hall business operating within the dominant ideology of rational recreation. However by the early 1900s the entertainment landscape in Glasgow had undergone a profound transformation: increased demand for amusements and the introduction of technological innovations had resulted in a rapidly expanding market for urban entertainments. This new, fast-moving and intensely competitive market resulted in a collision of new and old influences, as highly capitalised syndicated music-hall managements competed with new technological innovations, most notably cinema, on one hand, and encroaching urban manifestations of older fairground and rural amusement cultures on the other. Frank Bruce expresses the conflict as one of competing cultures:

> A globalising, big-finance, technological culture industry was unfolding. Yet local culture remained robust, mediating and to an extent acting as a buffer to change. In the case of popular theatre, the last metropolitan hits and stars had to vie with a vigorous tradition of Scots songs, sketches and homegrown performers at the Empires, Alhambras and Palaces.[1]

The transformation of entertainments was part of a wider impulse, a move towards embracing the social and economic impact of the modern, which Peter Bailey suggests saw theatres feature as 'sites of modernity that

generated their own response to its dilemmas in a popular modernism'.[2] At the same time the need to fulfil the demands of the mass market meant that 'Social spaces of distraction and display became as vital to urban culture as the spaces of working and living.'[3] If the period up to the 1890s had been dominated by the improving moral ethos of reforming influences, the turn of the twentieth century marked the rise of a vigorous commercial entertainment culture.

This chapter will explore this new expanded urban market through the example of the Britannia, which underwent a transformation in its own fortunes over the period. Previously one of Glasgow's leading music halls, by 1900 the Brit could no longer compete with larger, more modern variety theatres and was marketing itself as an exclusively working-class entertainment. However in 1906 the hall was acquired by the Yorkshire-born showman, A.E. Pickard, who renamed it the Panopticon, and reopened it in combination with his adjacent American museum & waxworks. Formerly a music hall, the Britannia was now part of an amusement complex, competing in the entertainment market of Trongate and Argyle Street. Studying it enables us to locate Pickard's two initial venues, and the strategies he pursued in marketing them, within the broader entertainment economy of the city centre.

Accepting that wider currents of change were at work in society, the question is what caused this increased public demand for entertainment?

One contributory factor was the introduction in the 1890s of variety, essentially a marketing initiative to rebrand music hall for middle-class audiences, which pioneered a system of large-scale capital investment in large new city centre venues. Other live entertainments, notably legitimate theatre, and popular concert series, had also become important economic contributors. Requiring investment in infrastructure and venues, and outlay on planning, promotion and publicity, these had developed into substantial financial enterprises, which attracted large audiences and generated sizeable box-office revenues.

At the same time, religious and cultural attitudes to entertainment had undergone a marked change. This may have been due to shifts in public perceptions that reflected recent development in entertainments: the impact of self-consciously modern genres like variety and musical comedy; the fact that the inclusion of music hall performances in popular concerts had rendered it more familiar and acceptable to middle-class audiences; and the gradual softening of Presbyterian disapproval. Whatever the combination of factors, the climate was now hugely more receptive to the idea

of exuberant public enjoyment. As Neil Munro's character 'Erchie' put it, in a story written in 1904, the year that Pickard acquired the Waxworks in Trongate:

> Theatres and music-halls is no' looked doon on noo in Scotland the wye they used to be. I mind when ye wad lose your place if ye were seen gaun into the Britannia, and if ye were for a nicht in Davie Broon's [music hall] ye had to disguise yoursel' wi' a false baird and the skip o' your kep doon on your nose for fear ye met somebody belonging to the same kirk as yoursel'! Nooadays the genteelest and the best-leevin' folk gang to theatres and music-halls if somebody gi'es them a ticket for naething. Theatres and music-halls is gettin' as common as mulk shops …[4]

The range of entertainments that benefited from this booming market was much broader than simply theatre and music hall. Competition for working-class audiences extended to a variety of popular amusements and attractions that, although thoroughly urbanised, reflected older patterns of seasonal activity. Tracy Davis has warned of the danger of perceiving the development of music hall and 'its affects as a type of enterprise … as if it competed only with itself, and not with respect to the pre-existing economy of entertainments'.[5] The idea of a complex market that included resurgent older forms was particularly applicable in turn of the century Glasgow, when competition was at its keenest during the twin holiday periods of Christmas/New Year and Glasgow Fair in July.

The range of amusements being referred to here perhaps needs detailing. In the first instance, fairground attractions were as integral to the urban scene as the leading music halls, through a number of substantial showgrounds and outdoor attractions situated within walking distance of the city centre. The grounds of the Old Barracks Carnival in the Gallowgate, which specialised in spectacular re-enactments of battles, complete with music, pyrotechnics and hundreds of participants, and which in 1901 offered a 'large scale military spectacle "The Siege of Mafeking"', held 60–70,000 people. Further east, Green's Vinegar Hill showground at Camlachie, to which Glasgow Fair had been moved in 1870, was similarly substantial. To the north, E.H. Bostock's Scottish Zoo in New City Road claimed to be 'the largest covered building in Scotland' ('Waverly Market excepted'). And in the West End, trade adverts termed the Kelvingrove Carnival 'The Scottish Earl's Court'.[6] The size and commercial operation of these large-scale presentations constituted major capital investments that rivalled those of syndicated palaces of varieties.

The vogue for thrills and spectacle partly took its inspiration from the popularity of the Glasgow International Exhibitions of 1888 and 1901. Conceived as prestigious trade fairs, designed to showcase Scottish manufacturing industry and consumer durables, the organisers of the 1888 Exhibition at Kelvingrove had initially overlooked the need for public entertainments. Although the 1901 Exhibition was also criticised for its limited provision, features such as the switchback, gondola rides on the Kelvin, and the Canadian water chute proved extremely popular and were replicated in similar rides offered by commercial showmen on adjacent sites. The opening day of the 1901 Exhibition saw 90,000 people pass through the turnstiles, and over the year 1,111,000 passengers rode on the switchback and 651,000 the water chute.[7] By introducing the public to the proto-theme park experience, the Exhibitions helped establish a fashionable vogue for large-scale popular amusements, and for the thrill of rides in particular.

While showmen further down the chain sought to exploit the Exhibition's fashionable imprimatur in the names of their own shows, venues like the 'Trongate World's Fair and Exhibition' represented a more localised phenomenon—that of high street exhibitions that offered living curiosities, waxworks and novelties. Operating on a smaller scale, these occupied permanent premises in city centre locations. In Trongate, where Pickard's 1904 acquisition, the former Fell's Waxworks, had been established since 1866, rival exhibitions included Crouch's Wonderland (at 137 Argyle Street), and McLeod's Waxworks (151 Trongate), both local landmarks. However these permanent venues were only part of the shifting market for urban novelties, in which temporary shows and exhibitions, set up in rented shops or vacant premises, were more representative of day to day activity. Vanessa Toulmin suggests that these 'shop shows', as they were called, 'were a response to a predominantly urban and working-class desire for cheap entertainment, and exploited the availability of commercial premises in busy thoroughfares'.[8] The ephemeral nature of these entertainments, which were untraceable except through advertisements, as they left no record in Post Office directories, only emphasises their close relationship to the fluctuations of the market. Examples of such shop shows in Glasgow in 1901 included Professor Harleno at the People's Palace, Trongate, with a conjuring entertainment, together with a Giant Phonograph and the Egyptian Mystery, 'the bodiless lady on pedestal', presented by Professor Burt Andrews; a Professor George was similarly showing 'the bodiless lady illusion' at a rented shop on the Gallowgate; a

shop in Argyle Street had an exhibition of knife-throwing and lightning rifle drill, while next door a 'wire-king' made brooches and scarf pins; the American Museum in Argyll Street had White's Cinematograph; and the Novelty Palace in Sauchiehall Street featured a Transvaal shooting gallery, and enticed sightseers inside with an exhibition of glass-blowing before encouraging them to spend money on the automatic machines.[9]

Beyond theatres and music halls then, the market for urban amusements comprised a number of distinct spheres of activity: the huge municipally-sponsored Glasgow Exhibitions, which acted as a focus for public enthusiasm for rides and technological developments; large showground-based attractions offering military and equestrian spectacles, together with circuses, bioscopes and sideshows; permanent waxwork museums, the more established of which became city institutions; and the temporary shop shows or travelling exhibitions, that set up for short periods in city centre locations, similarly offering freaks, waxworks and novelties.

While this rich range of amusements, an important part of late Victorian urban culture, is now receiving attention from cultural historians exploring the fields of popular visual culture and phenomena associated with early film,[10] the explanation for its previous neglect perhaps lies in a tendency to anticipate cinema's impact on the entertainment landscape.

Films, shortly to emerge as the first mass entertainment, were evident everywhere by the early 1900s—in travelling fairground shows, in demonstration screenings in department stores, and as bioscope and cinematograph presentations on music hall bills. But cinema's subsequent rise has perhaps led some historians to overlook the expansion in the range of other commercial entertainments that took place between the late 1890s and the First World War. This preoccupation with the narrative of cinema's ascendance has overshadowed the rich complexity of this transitional period, one in which the wide range of popular semi-permanent fairground and street-based attractions described, that represented the vestigial elements of the older fairs, and their sporting and rural traditions, was still able to compete with highly-capitalised popular theatre genres like variety. Although cinema's subsequent development made the decline of this live amusement culture inevitable, the late flowering of these older forms represented not an incipient decline, but rather the highpoint of their capitalist elaboration within a sophisticated urban entertainment economy. The astuteness of these fairground entertainment businesses was indicated by the fact that leading showmen like the Greens and Kemps were early promoters of travelling bioscope shows, and among the first to

establish chains of cinemas. Show culture did not therefore wither on the vine in the early 1900s: it rather led the revolution into cinema.

This chapter will use Pickard's management of the Panopticon to explore this expanded urban entertainment market in order to argue two points: first, that the period between the late 1890s and 1914—between the introduction of variety and the emergence of cinema as the defining mass entertainment—constituted a distinct transitional phase in urban entertainments, during which film was present but not dominant, and during which urban forms of fairground amusements were able to compete against more modern genres on a comparatively even basis. While this amusement culture was to decline after the First World War, in this phase it nevertheless constituted a full partner in the booming urban entertainment economy.

Second, I suggest that Pickard's management of the Panopticon, as an independent entrepreneur working at the lower level of his local market, represented an alternative financial model to that of leading syndicated impresarios like Moss and Stoll; one reliant on lower investment and margins of profit return, but which managed to capitalise on a very different set of conditions to sustain his working-class audiences and business beyond its likely life expectancy. In this respect Pickard—who did not come from a theatre background but was a fairground showman—represented a new type of manager, a speculative investor, whose involvement reflected a particular historical moment, when the economics of the entertainment market seemed to offer the potential for substantial capital return.

In the era of chains and syndicates in the early 1900s, does the Panopticon then provide a counter model of small-scale activity? Exploring these areas, I suggest the Panopticon was both exceptional, through Pickard's idiosyncratic style of management, and representative, in that it embodied responses to market pressures experienced by many other small music halls. The broader question is whether the Panopticon, and the myriad ways in which Pickard sought to utilise the building, were part of the development of this new modernity, the coming world of mass entertainment, or really belonged to the old world of Victorian music hall and fairground amusements?

Pickard himself is a perfect subject for these debates, in that he saw himself as a modernist, a dynamic impresario who was closely attuned to the latest developments in American entertainment culture, but who simultaneously saw market developments as involving a renewal of show

culture. In a c.1910 interview Pickard, asked about the current craze for roller-skating, offered his views of the latest directions in commercial entertainments. His summarising of new trends as reflecting the speeding up of modern living—a very familiar complaint—and the impact of American culture, is fascinating:

> The public taste in the matter of entertainments has undergone great changes in recent years. The public take their pleasure in tabloid doses—many and often. The times are too strenuous for the one-show-a-night variety show of ten or twenty years ago. Britain is rapidly becoming Americanised. A good job, too, for Yankees know how to get more out of life than most other people. What the toiling masses of this country want is more pleasure fairs, carnivals, and White cities, with their great waterchutes, dragon slides, gravitation railways, mystic rivers, airships, jungle and Bisley rifle ranges, games of skill, and other sideshows. For toil-worn people the fun and hilarity of a pleasure fair was an effective medicine and corrective. In a few years the open-air carnivals will be as popular with the public as the variety theatres are today.[11]

Pickard's highlighting of new trends in fairground rides and attractions reflects his reputation as a showman who offered the most modern, up-to-date entertainments. Early biographies circulated when he opened the Panopticon stressed his credentials as an international showman who had exhibited at the World's Fair at St Louis, the Paris Exhibition and at the Agricultural Hall in London, even if some accounts conflict with this cosmopolitan profile (one contemporary source wrote that 'Pickard was originally a showman or traveller as they call themselves and ran a dolly board at Vinegar Hill during the Fair Holidays', adding 'He bought the waxwork for a mere song, as his predecessor had done before him'[12]). Pickard was fascinated by developments in American entertainment culture, and by the late 1930s had reportedly made four visits to the United States, as well as regular trips to Europe, scouting for acts and new developments in entertainment. His policy of launching the Panopticon with six variety performances a day, subsequently reduced to four, strongly echoes the practices of 'small-time' American vaudeville, which similarly worked on a basis of almost continuous performances, effectively requiring that performers didn't leave the theatre from morning to late evening. A striking aspect of the interview is that although Pickard's comments on the ways audiences are changing in their approach to entertainment seem perceptive—and actually very modern in remarking on the faster pace and

shorter attention spans of modern living—he seems to see the future in terms of a new lease of life for live showground culture—in other words for a live entertainment experience rather than in film. This intriguing take on the direction of travel in modern entertainments locates Pickard at the very cusp of this elusive transitional period just prior to the First World War, when live entertainments supported by technological developments still seemed a perfectly sustainable and viable alternative to a future dominated by cinema.

In exploring Pickard's management I will focus on four aspects of his activities: first, his role as a showman promoting 'living curiosities' or freaks, and attempts to exploit their intellectual capital through overseas sales; second, his use of a limited-liability company to move capital from the Panopticon through other entertainment businesses into investments in property; third, Pickard's use of populism in appealing to working-class audiences to both sustain the profile of his venues and promote commercial schemes; and, fourth, in his use of technological innovations to recycle tropes of older entertainment and sporting cultures associated with the building.

What these areas share is that all four broadly demonstrate attempts by Pickard to add or extract capital value from older or pre-existing entertainment forms—be they inherited conventions governing the exhibiting of freaks, the deployment of existing venues or commercial structures in new ways, the appeal to the hall's populist associations as a working-class resort, or the managing of audience expectations and community feeling that, in the right context, could come to constitute an exploitable commodity to an entrepreneur like Pickard.

'Living Curiosities': Freaks and Capital

Exploring the first of these involves examining the operation of the Panopticon's sister establishment, the waxworks at 101 Trongate, Pickard's first Glasgow venue, which he acquired in 1904. It is hard to appreciate now that waxworks were often significant city centre landmarks regarded as an educational resource. A young Harry Lauder and his bride spent the afternoon of their Saturday honeymoon in MacLeod's waxworks in the Trongate, waxworks being 'in those days … one of the greatest treats to which a man could entertain his wife or sweetheart'.[13] Fell's Waxworks, at 101 Trongate, had been established since 1866. (Although the building's name changed constantly I will refer to it in this chapter as

the waxworks.[14]) On taking it over Pickard installed as manager Henry Thomas (Harry) Hill, an English showman, originally from York. Hill ran the waxworks from 1904 to his death in 1925, making and arranging the wax figures and booking the freaks, while his son became the establishment's animal trainer. While a catalogue of the waxworks exhibition survives from c.1913, a detailed description of the building's layout and exhibits provided by interviews with Hill's grandson, also named Harry Hill, allows us to recreate an impression of the exhibition as it was in Pickard's time (Fig. 5.1).[15]

In Hill's account, the front entrance, flanked by two 13 foot-high brass figures of Vikings from a Pickard cinema in Shawlands, led to a spiral staircase which provided access to three floors above. On entering, the ground floor featured display cases containing wax figures of members of the Royal family and prominent people, such as the fraudster Horatio Bottomley. There was also an automatic barrel organ in which visitors could insert a coin and select a tune. Continuing upstairs, past paintings of people and events in Glasgow history, the first floor contained a stage on which the 'freaks' gave their exhibitions and performances two or three times daily to audiences of around fifty people, and where they circulated afterwards to sign postcards and sell potted biographies. The frequency of shows varied according to demand: Hill remembers feeing days, when farmers came to town to recruit workers, and congregated in pubs like the Crystal Bells in Watson Street before visiting local amusements, as being among the busiest. The first floor also contained mechanical novelties: weighing machines, a punchball, a glass-cased model of 'The Sleeping Beauty', and a number of coin-activated automata: The Dying Turk, Mary Queen of Scots being beheaded, and Charlie Peace's last Bite. The second floor housed a menagerie, including the chimpanzees Betsy and Solomon, which were trained by Hill's son, who was killed serving in the First World War, as well as an assortment of birds. The top floor contained more wax figures, including a 'Criminal Gallery', which featured such notorious figures as Oscar Slater, Alexander Edmondstone, 'the Fife Murderer'; the famous burgler and 'Bannercross murderer' Charles Peace, the poisoner Stinie Morrison, and Dr Pritchard, the last person to be publicly hanged in Glasgow. All waxworks had a version of this criminal chamber of horrors, which was evidently extremely popular (Lauder remembered 'standing spellbound before the effigies of Charlie Peace, Burke and Hare and other notorious robbers and scoundrels and murderers! What a honeymoon!') Additional attractions included a resident fortune-teller, Madame Florence, the 'Royal

Fig. 5.1 Catalogue, Pickard's British Museum, Waxwork and Zoo, c.1913. Glasgow Life Photo Library (© CSG CIC Glasgow Museums and Libraries Collections)

Gipsy palmist', and a family of glass blowers, who gave demonstrations and sold the glass ships and animals they made from a stall.

The catalogue makes clear that the bulk of the exhibits had been accumulated over a considerable period, and the collection Pickard showed represented a considerable degree of continuity with that of previous managers, preserving a strongly localised cultural identity with many exhibits relating to Glasgow's popular culture.

If much of the collection would have been familiar to repeat visitors, the techniques used in displaying exhibits similarly followed long-established practices. A key showman's tenet concerned the need for a narrative in selling an illusion to the public: in the dictum of the showman Tom Norman, 'It was not the show, it was the tale that you told.'[16] So the life-size exhibit of The Sleeping Beauty was given a name—Madame St Amaranthe— and a tragic biography that cast her as 'a moving figure of a young lady of surpassing loveliness' from the French Revolution, who, having refused to become Robespierre's mistress, was condemned by the revolutionary tribunal: 'at the age of 22 this victim of virtue was hurried into eternity'.[17]

Automata and coin-operated mechanical devices similarly often featured macabre or Grand Guignol subjects that showmen favoured. Harry Hill, who as a boy regularly frequented the waxworks where both his grandfather and father worked, remembers a grisly favourite:

> One floor up there was the Dying Turk, him with his chest and he's all wounded and bleeding and he's [big wheezing sound], breathing his last, you know, and you put a penny and he [big breath], [laughs] oh comic, you know.

Another interviewee, William Gray, also remembers the macabre focus of arcades:

> they were full of all the wee gadgets, you put a penny in and you made people—automatons—[go] walking about, somebody getting beheaded or it turned out somebody was being hung or something, and it went through all the paraphernalia of how you got hung. And it served them right, sort of thing [laughs].[18]

Within the wider display, the balance between familiar and modern influences is difficult to discern. Mechanical attractions, which might have been expected to reference innovation and modernity, seem often to have

reinforced older cultural forms and subjects. Figures like Charlie Peace—a burglar executed in 1879 who subsequently took on a mythologised Robin Hood-type persona—were perpetuated for new generations through their treatment in new technologies; the subject of two films in 1905, Peace's representation in Pickard's collection included not only an automata scene of his death cell, but also the reputed remnants of the condemned man's final meal—his 'last bite'—and a piece of the rope used to hang him.

While the accumulated collection constituted a familiar attraction, and mechanical novelties generated income from customers circulating the building, the dynamic, crowd-pulling element that really impelled people into the exhibition in the first place was the freaks.

The display of freaks and living exhibitions was a specialist area of the amusement trade (the term show business pertains to exactly this area of entrepreneurial fairground activity). Pickard was only one of several local showmen promoting and exploiting freaks as a marketable commodity. Fell's, the collection he took over in 1904, had been functioning on unchanged lines for at least a generation: a Washington Wilson photograph of Trongate, probably from 1885, shows the building largely unchanged from its later incarnation, with advertisements for 'Millie-Christine, the Two-Headed Nightingale', signifying the engagement of Millie and Christine McKoy, conjoined black Siamese twins brought to Britain by P..T Barnum (Fig. 5.2). The techniques of freak display had not changed in the twenty years since, and the market remained highly competitive. Although there was an established waxworks in most cities—Carters in Belfast, Reynolds in Liverpool, Stewarts in Edinburgh and Humbers in Aberdeen—new competitors could quickly materialise. In 1906 Glasgow's two existing exhibitions—Pickard's and that of his nearby Argyle Street rival, Herbert Crouch—were joined by two new arrivals: Frederick Stewart, who ran exhibitions in London and Edinburgh, established a waxworks at 124 Cowcaddens, and Rendall Burnette's 'Up-To-Date Waxworks' opened at 273 Argyle Street. While both were well-known showmen whose appearance on the local scene was taken to confirm that 'waxworks are becoming a popular source of attraction', the resulting competition served to underline how formalised the showmanship of these presentations had become. While Stewart offered draws like 'L'Homme Fauvre, The Wild Man … from the forests of Siberia, Half-man, Half-Beast—Alive!', Pickard's countering attractions including Lucy Moore, 'the American Fat Girl'; Alice Vane, 'The Bear Woman'; The Irish Giant; The Armless Mechanic, and 'Homard, Maid of the Seas'.

Fig. 5.2 George Washington Wilson, Trongate, Glasgow c.1880s, with (*right*) Fell's Waxworks, showing advert for Mdlle. Millie Christine, the 'Two-Headed Nightingale' (By kind permission of University of Aberdeen Library)

While Pickard's presentation of freaks was then not distinctive, his innovation lay in his attempts to exploit the intellectual capital of his attractions by selling them on to international markets.

Most waxworks managers procured their headline attractions through other impresarios. But although Tom Norman, who managed shows in London and the provinces, supplied Pickard with such attractions as Mary Anne Bevan, the World's Ugliest Woman, and Leonine, the Lion-Faced Lady, Pickard also sourced and developed his own freak performers.[19] One was James Henney, a miner from Harthill in Lanarkshire, who possessed a rare condition which gave his skin special properties. A first-hand account recalling a similar act at the waxworks, which may in fact have been Henney, spoke of the performer 'standing bared from the waist, and if they marked him with a piece of stick or a match it came up, you could draw big pictures on him, it came up like a wield (welt)'.[20] In August 1925 Pickard contracted Henney to appear as the 'Human Blister' for ten weeks on a weekly salary of four pounds. The letter of contract stipulated that Henney agreed 'to show at all times as required by the management of the American Museum & Waxwork, from 10 am until closing time', a demand that proved exhausting, given the hours required.[21]

Although Henney did not enjoy the experience and subsequently returned home, rejecting the financial rewards available, professional freak performers were acutely aware of their worth. As a trade paper put it, 'Freaks know their market value to a shilling, and the showman knows just what will draw the public.'[22] Living skeletons could command salaries of £5 to £10 per week, while 'Giants in good health, if they are really big men, can earn nearly as much as the India rubber-skinned man; while rare novelties, like the two-headed boy or the Siamese twins, are worth just what the showman can afford to pay them—often £20 or more per week.'

This commodification of attractions evidently reflected demand, and meant that, in the words of a contemporary source, 'freak exhibiting is the most paying part of the whole show business'. Pickard evidently recognised that promoting freak attractions to other managers or to markets abroad was an area with potentially exploitable capital value.

Tracy Davis, in her work on the economics of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century theatre, has analysed the cultural capital that could be derived from theatre works as a means of cultural production, exploring how Victorian producers went about 'squeeze[ing] more value, and hence profit, from successful productions'.[23] Strategies for this might include selling on its scenery and costumes to another management,

which extracted additional value from the original investment. But if the question of how to benefit from its intellectual capital—the *mise en scène*, scenography and lighting plot—was more problematic, Davis finds that the physical aspects—the practical accoutrements—of a theatre production also contained additional value providing they remained as an entity: she observes, 'The real property—*as an ensemble*—took on value provided that it was kept together. This ensemble even took on commodity value within a genre without being tied to a particular script.'[24] If the genre Davis had in mind was probably pantomime, could the same added value not apply to the individual freak performance itself when viewed as a totality? By this criteria, the freak's professional persona—the combination of their particular unique physical condition or features, their presentational or stage costume aspect, and the all-important narrative constructed to engage the public, cultivated in publicity and promoted through images and biographies—constituted an additional value vested in the completeness of the performance.

Pickard's added value therefore involved originating or capitalizing on freak performers by working up their professional profile to the point where they were exploitable by selling on. A key part of this involved developing an elaborate, entrancing story which could capture the public imagination even before the attraction hit town. An example was Pickard's Irish Leprechaun, who was apparently first discovered in the west of Ireland by children on their way to school, who heard 'the tap, tap, tap of the little man's hammer as he was mending his pots and pans under the shadow of a big dock-leaf in the woods', and who was rescued from the workhouse by Pickard's agents.

The purest example of a worked-up item was an act like Solomon, a chimpanzee in the waxworks menagerie, who became a headline attraction billed as 'The Missing Link'. In fact, Solomon—a chimp dressed in a boater and a striped summer suit and exhibited as the Darwinian paradox—exemplified the idealized form of freak item as intellectual capital, consisting as it did of simply the animal, its properties and the conceit or construction that underlay the proposition: to paraphrase Tom Norman, 'the story told'.

Evidence of Pickard's international dealings is sketchy, in that no contracts or paperwork exist. His early biography stated that prior to acquiring the Panopticon Pickard had travelled widely in Europe and worked in the United States, where he visited the World's Fair in St Louis. His subsequent international travel included visiting the USA and Canada in

1908, when he crossed the Atlantic on board the SS *Mauretania*, and press coverage of his activities also regularly alluded to his international contacts: an article on Maud Temple, the 'Bearded lady' noted that it was his intention, after her Glasgow engagement, 'to tour her round the world'.

However the most significant evidence of Pickard's international activities lies in his relationship with the Hamburg theatrical lithographer and printer Adolph Friedländer, who between 1907 and 1913 produced a series of striking colour posters of Pickard attractions, originals of which survive in a Dutch circus museum's Friedländer collection (Fig. 5.3). Moreover recently surfaced cuttings albums, from Pickard's office records, include correspondence between Friedlander and Pickard dating from 1911–1912, as well as evidence of Pickard's trips to Belgium and Germany in 1909, when he visited circuses, variety theatres and cabarets, all confirming his active interest in the European entertainment

Fig. 5.3 Poster, 'L'Homme Poisson', 'Pickard's Enterprises'. Poster for Pickard attractions by Adolph Friedländer, 1907–13 (By kind permission of Friedländer collection, Circusarchief Jaap Best, Teylers Museum Haarlem)

market.[25] Bearing the imprimatur 'Pickard's Museum, Trongate, Glasgow', the acts featured in these sumptuous colour posters included 'The Living Art Gallery', 'Huge Lipton, the London Collossus'. and Miss Maud Temple, 'Britain's Bearded Lady' ('Alive at Pickard's Museum Glasgow') all of which appeared at the Glasgow waxworks. While most of the posters are in English, two—for Tom Thumb and 'Afrieta, the Man-Fish'—are in French and German respectively, indicating they were commissioned to support promotions in those countries.[26] While freak performers could move independently between different national markets, the posters advertise these acts' connection with Pickard's Glasgow Museum, and one features a branding logo, 'Pickards Enterprises'. The combination of high quality bespoke illustrated colour posters, produced by a leading European circus and variety lithographer, and in foreign language editions, suggest that Pickard may have made a serious attempt to penetrate European markets. If so, the lack of later evidence of this suggests that the outbreak of war in 1914 might have curtailed these activities.

The inevitable comparison in these activities is with P.T. Barnum, the American showman who established the original American Museum in New York in the 1850s, and whose working practices and techniques were hugely influential. In his early years Pickard certainly self-consciously modelled himself on Barnum, adopting various of his techniques, most notably his self-promotion, use of slogans and propagandising, and manipulation of the press. An early profile of the Panopticon in *The World's Fair* referred to Pickard as 'the Barnum of the North', and one of the first slogans he used when announcing his acquisition of the hall, 'Nothing like it ever seen before!', was a direct quotation of a famous Barnum catchphrase.[27]

However, beyond these techniques and personal traits there are important differences which illustrate what was distinctive about Pickard's methods.

One of the issues surrounding commercial entertainments that was critical to Pickard's success concerned differing concepts of what constituted value. The great International Exhibitions became a byword for excellence, and a focus of national and municipal pride at the image they projected of a modern industrial society. Although the public associated the Exhibitions, cultural theme parks of their day, with the experience of days out and pleasurable entertainments, the organisers only reluctantly conceded the importance of public amusements at all. In contrast, commercial showmen, competing for public attention, calibrated value in specific, economic terms. Advertisements for Greens' 1901 Carnival (Fig. 5.4), a showground in the East End, sought to equate it with the prestigious

Fig. 5.4 The Exhibition & The Carnival, 'Mafeking', 1901. The illustration is a photograph of the production (*The Glasgow Programme and Exhibition Journal*, No. 238, week beginning 5 August 1901. © CSG CIC Glasgow Museums and Libraries Collections)

international event, claiming 'The Exhibition and the Carnival constitute the twin sights of the city'. But thereafter promotional copy stressed the value of the Carnival, which in 'adding enjoyment to the unbroken monotony of the working man's life', offered merry-go-rounds, prize stalls, a monkey house, lions, seals, an aviary, elephant rides, electrically-lit grounds, music from bands and steam organs, a circus and the 'great spectacular Drama, Mafeking', with 500 participants, all for the admission price of a penny.[28] The *Glasgow Programme's* editorial put the comparison in blunt, class terms, stating that 'there is no doubt whatever that for one penny there is very much better value given in the East-end than for one shilling in the West'.

Pickard could not hope to compete with this definition of value. His technique, given his modest resources, involved shifting the grounds of the discussion to a basis which emulated what the American historian James Cook has described as Barnum's 'artful deceptions'. In Cook's definition, this involved the showman first orchestrating public debate around

the object of the exhibition, putting the case both for and against its veracity, before then stepping back and encouraging the public to decide for itself whether it constituted value. The critical factor was not whether the object was genuine—if the showman had done their job properly this was presented as essentially unknowable—but whether it was worth the price of admission to find out. In shifting the discussion of value to these terms, Pickard could side-step direct comparisons with larger competitors and make the subject of the debate the entertainment value that derived from his own eccentric entrepreneurial showmanship.

However, Barnum's refined 'artful deception' belonged to a different world. It reflected a particular historical moment and social constituency, the concern of the new American middle classes over fraud, and the question of how to tell the real thing from the fake. As Cook points out, Barnum's campaigns were 'built on a pack of lies, but also on a new kind of lying; lying which reconstructed the daily dramas of urban market exchange as a form of popular cultural play'.[29] At the same time Barnum was also having to counter powerful scientific and philanthropic interests lobbying for the (re)establishment of a professional scientific museum culture. Pickard, on the other hand, offers a quite different context. With no expectation of a middle-class constituency, his own instincts are for populist, counter-hegemonic expression, of an order that takes the democratic instinct of Barnum's museum and develops it a stage further, towards a populism that expresses Pickard's own idiosyncratic anti-establishment tendencies.

In fact, there had existed another Dime Museum culture in America before Barnum—one based on Peale's Philadelphia Museum, which was preoccupied with distinguishing the precise line between genuine and the fraudulent that Barnum so successfully obfuscated. Similarly, Pickard's model of popular amusement promotion, even while it adapted Barnum's precepts to a different social and economic context, also drew on older indigenous Scottish fairground traditions going back to the early nineteenth century. Pickard's museum furnishes several examples of the overlaying of these older resonances.

The first concerns the notion of credulity and cultural play in freak attractions. Pickard's Museum, like similar establishments, usually engaged a freak as its headline attraction, to feature in advertising and act as a promotional focus. However when shown an advertising illustration of a Pickard attraction, 'The Human Spider' (Fig. 5.5), Harry Hill explained that the act was his auntie Flora. On the odd occasions when his grandfather was for some reason not able to engage a bona fide attraction,

Fig. 5.5 'The Human Spider', Pickard's Museum (By kind permission of Anthony Duda)

he would be forced to conjure something up to fill in, usually involving a member of the family. The Human Spider involved his aunt lying on a board, with her head inserted into a fake-fur spider body, set within a frame, with a web made of washing line, while the legs were manipulated

by strings and she was fed rubber beetles.[30] The effect was clearly fairly preposterous, even by the standard of freaks but it went down very well with customers, who found it funny or provocative. A similar manufactured freak, titled 'the blue boy', involved a member of the family being dyed blue and presented as a natural phenomenon of nature. The inference is that it was expected. This was clearly a cruder display than that suggested by Barnum's elaborately constructed quasi-scientific controversies, such as the (half-monkey/half-fish) 'Feejee Mermaid', but the audience laughed, probably because of the sheer transparency of the fraud.

A similar instance of a display influenced by older traditions involved the appearance of the Dahomey warriors. Interviewed for this research, Bobby Reid described how, as a ten year-old boy in 1923, he and some friends paid a ha'penny to ride on a tram from Maryhill to the waxworks. After viewing the lower exhibits and animals:

> we went up the stairs … to the next floor, and that was where the really interesting bit was. There was a crowd of Zulus, Zulu warriors, came charging towards us. And the drums were beating away and we were terrified, you know. Actually it was fun, but it terrified us.

Pressed to describe the warriors, he explained:

> They were loose, they were just on a platform. We went up the stairs and they were standing there, they were beating their spears on their shields and that, (thwack) banging and shouting and bawling, you know, and they were pretending to be going to charge us. And there were probably other people there, but I don't remember seeing anybody else bar us, we were terrified.[31]

The telling admission is that the experience was both terrifying *and* fun (the boys went back a second time). But while the excitement comes from the palpable danger they felt, Hill offers further insight into the performance. Describing Pickard's compere for the freak shows, and the patter used, he explains:

> He did the show. He could fairly talk, you know. Especially the time when they had the Egyptian mummy and the shrunken heads. There were two Americans, black fellers, who used to come in regular every time their ship was in. And he got them to do the Dahomey warriors, as he called them. They had to speak in their language. He was … [makes gobblydegook sounds] … 'What's that they're saying?', you know, all this carry on. But he was quite good. And that's the way they used to do it then, you know.

THE DAHOMEY WARRIORS.

A Tribe of Black Warriors first introduced into this Country by Mr. Pickard.

7

Fig. 5.6 The Dahomey Warriors, catalogue, Pickard's British Museum, Waxworks & Zoo, c.1913 (© CSG CIC Glasgow Museums and Libraries Collections)

The show presented a sort of generic savage primitive (Fig. 5.6). While the ten-year-old boys were convinced, the inference is that adults would have been much more sceptical, and that the subterfuge may well have been as transparent as the Human Spider (Harry Hill, as a boy, realised what

was going on). This then was not Barnum's 'artful deception', involving a reasonably plausible artefact or elaborately faked anthropological specimen, but a knockabout imposture, a piece of carnivalesque dressing up, which the audience enjoyed precisely because it *was* so evident, and done as a gag.

Dahomeyans had come to wider prominence when they were displayed as living exhibits at the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago.[32] However, their appeal for showmen lay in the notoriety of their recent bloody history, their associations with slavery, cannibalism and human sacrifice looming large in the lurid imaginative rhetoric of the dark continent and the missing link. Pickard had included a waxworks tableau of 'scenes of human sacrifices at Dahomey' in his opening of the Panopticon in July 1906.[33] But by December his Argyle Street rival Burnette was offering live 'Dahomey Warriors', in the form of a seven-strong Tom Norman-presented troupe. Headed by the 'Amazon Princess Gooma and the chieftain Lobogolo' and dressed in native costume, they performed a programme of 'war dances, club and sword combats, fetish worship, and walking and dancing on glass', together with 'similar demonstrations […] illustrative of the savagery of their native customs'.[34]

However, if this represented a showman's attempt at ethnological style, Pickard's later, much cruder-sounding, presentation seemed something altogether different: a broad ethnic burlesque whose origins lay in older show traditions associated with Glasgow Fair.

The local roots of this sort of act went back to at least the mid-nineteenth century. In 1847 the actor and impresario David Prince Miller presented a 'most extraordinary race of beings, the Bosjemans' at Glasgow Fair, attracting 96,000 visitors in thirteen days at an admission price of a penny. Public interest in the group seems to have been much more focused on the question of whether or not they were genuine than with the possibility of studying or learning about their culture: competing rumours claimed the 'savages' were really Paisley weavers, Irishmen or Highlanders. Another story told how an Irishman, robbed on the road by a fellow countryman, claimed to have seen his assailant among the Bosjemans, dressed in their outlandish costume. Miller also described how, on another occasion in his fairground career he dressed up in a fantastic costume to impersonate a Black Giantess, only to be discovered when male customers demanded kisses, causing his make-up to come off, much to the humour of all involved.[35]

The fact that Pickard's knockabout aesthetic seems much closer to the playfulness of Miller's approach indicates the different nature of the

intended entertainment. For all that Dahomey was by the time of Pickard's presentation, around the First World War, an ethnographic 'brand', which connoted certain expectations of authenticity—to which Pickard was happy to pay lip service—his actual presentation involved blatant impersonation and a made-up language. With the protagonists locally-based black American donkeymen or stevedores (one interview subject related that they stayed in nearby Parnie Street), nothing about this suggests plausibility, or anything other than the most generic fairground take on African ethnicity.

The Dahomey warriors Hill describes then still teased the audience with the question of their authenticity—of whether they were what they claimed to be. But under this older convention the emphasis of the joke lay, as in the case of the Human Spider, a similarly self-evident piece of imposture, not in the question itself, the answer to which was never in doubt, but in celebrating the very transparency—and audacity—of the showman's claim. In this, they embodied Barnum's antebellum premise that 'the public was amused even when it was conscious of being deceived'.

Financial Capital

The waxworks museum and the promotion of freaks as cultural capital was one part of Pickard's business that remained relatively self-contained. On the wider front, the Panopticon remained the main focus of his activity.

As descriptions of the wider entertainment economy suggests, Pickard's commercial position was complex. At the bottom end of Glasgow's music hall market, and operating an ageing venue, he was in an unfashionable part of the city centre to compete for better audiences, even if he had had the wherewithal to attract leading performers. Nevertheless, in this central location, burdened with the overheads of a permanent building, he was also in danger of being undercut by visiting seasonal 'shows' situated in fairground areas to the east of Glasgow Cross, like the Gallowgate, closer by his core working-class clientele.

Over the next four years, Pickard expended enormous effort to devise new means of utilising the Panopticon in ways that brought in the public. In August 1906, a month after opening, he resumed Hubner's successful Friday Amateur Nights, at which aspiring performers could try their hand as a 'trial' or 'extra turn', lured by the prospect of cash prizes and even a paying engagement if they went down well. (The young Stan Laurel, whose father ran the nearby Metropole Theatre in Stockwell Street, made

his stage debut as one of these extra turns, although it seems debatable at which of Pickard's Trongate venues he actually performed.[36]) In June 1908, after much pre-publicity, he opened his 'Pickard's Noah's Ark and Glasgow Zoo' on the ground floor of the Panopticon, which, advertised as 'The finest collection of animals ever exhibited', provoked a very public (and no-doubt calculated) spat with E.H. Bostock, the proprietor of the New Scottish Zoo and Hippodrome.[37] In 1908 he introduced a 'Free Zoo and fancy fair in the Roof Garden', a large space situated directly over the Britannia auditorium, with '28 cages of wild animals and birds'. In March 1909, he introduced 'topical' films to attract those involved to come along in the hope of seeing themselves on the screen.[38] While bioscopes were an established item on music hall programmes in 1906, in 1910 Pickard switched the Panopticon over to film shows, but with live acts still interspersing the features. Extravagant claims and hyperbole were a key part of Pickard's appeal: at one point, in an advertisement headed 'Pickard Victorious Again', he announced a new (and preposterous) record for admittance over two days of 75,789 people, for what he termed 'The Greatest Pleasure Palace in the wide, wide world.'[39]

Pickard's working practices, although highly idiosyncratic, are significant for the light they shed on the stage of development that popular theatre had reached in the period between the early 1900s and early 1930s. In Pickard's case, his eccentricities as a showman belied a business method which was reliant upon two closely-related factors: a highly creative use of publicity, generated personally by him for the benefit of his enterprises; and a low level of capital investment that reflected a coldly pragmatic approach to theatre as a financial concern.

To deal first with publicity, Pickard cultivated a reputation as a consummate showman and character, to the extent that many people of older generations in Glasgow still remember his name or can relate stories concerning him. He dressed eccentrically (he was fond of plus-fours, and went through phases when he affected a boy scout uniform and a kilt), from the 1920s owned a succession of cars, including a Packard and a pink Rolls Royce, and in his advertising termed himself 'Pickard Unlimited', and sprinkled his copy with puns and wordplays. A master of the pre-arranged stunt, he once opened a cinema by forcing the doors open with a battering ram from the other side of the street. In 1951 he stood for parliament as 'The Maryhill Millionaire'. However the impact of his self-promotion always tended towards surprise and the unexpected, to present himself as unpredictable. As a shrewd businessman, Pickard realised the

value of this quirky, enigmatic persona as a means of generating publicity for his activities. This personal basis for his coverage became increasingly important, as he cultivated an air of mystery, as in a series of small box ads containing cryptic—sometimes just rather odd—aphorisms ('The Sun Shines on Pickard—visit his theatres and share his Pleasures'). His turn-over of these quirky slogans and puns was such that he organised competitions for audience members to write in with their suggestions, offering prizes for the best. His records show that he kept lists of such material, meticulously noting the date on which he used alliterative joke titles like Kaiser of Candleriggs, Sultan of Saltmarket, Baron Barlinnie, Mikado of Mullguy (*sic*), Rajah of Rothesay.[40] By the very act of generating these materials Pickard used the branding of his name and reputation for show-manship to promote his venues and give them a distinct collective profile that they would not otherwise have attained.

The other factor about this publicity, which relates to the second aspect of Pickard's working methods, was that much of it was free. This was no doubt partly out of necessity: his theatres were bottom of the market enter-prises like to be operating on small profit margins, the principle being high turnover and small margins. Pickard's whole philosophy to the business of theatre was in fact starkly utilitarian. In examining his management, it seems clear that he used the Panopticon, his first success, as the springboard from which he built up his circuit of theatres, and subsequently cinemas.

Evidence of this, and of the Panopticon's financial performance, was contained in information disclosed in connection with Pickard's floating of the venue as a Limited Company in June 1910. The Glasgow Panopticon Ltd was set up to raise capital of £12,000 in £1 shares, with seven direc-tors, including Pickard himself as Managing Director. Summarising the venue's recent history, the prospectus stresses Pickard's achievement in rescuing the Britannia, and in identifying the commercial potential of the lower end of the entertainment market:

> it is everyday knowledge that since Mr. Pickard first acquired it [the Britannia], four years ago—re-naming it 'The Panopticon'—it was hence-forth rescued from the dark depths of failure into which it had fallen, and immediately transformed into one of the most flourishing places of enter-tainment in the whole of Scotland. To Mr. Pickard's sound judgement and foresight in being able to correctly gauge the most appropriate class of entertainment with which to appeal to the Glasgow public, combined with a readiness and ability to cater for the pocket of even the smallest wage-earner—to this, and this alone, is such an appreciable state of affairs due. It

may be here mentioned that in taking over the Britannia, Mr. Pickard did not by any means follow in the stereotyped lines laid down by his predecessors, but set himself the task of providing a combination of entertainments under one roof, which now constitutes the Panopticon, the only hall of its kind in Scotland.[41]

The assertion that 'the Panopticon has never been in a more flourishing condition' was supported by an auditors' statement that over the previous three years ending January 1910, net profits (before depreciation, income tax and Pickard's salary) had totalled £8,673 10s. 11d., while the average annual net profit had been £2,891 3s. 6d. The auditors further confirmed that drawings for the first sixteen weeks of the current year's trading showed an increase over the same period in the previous year of £10 per week.[42]

The Prospectus also made a commercial virtue out of the necessity of concentrating on the bottom end of the market, pointing out that, while business at other theatres and halls could suffer from passing fads like roller-skating, Pickard's niche market was secure, as:

> the catering at the Panopticon is primarily for the working classes, who cannot afford to indulge in more expensive recreation. For this reason also, the Panopticon cannot be presumed to suffer from opposition on the part of any of the other theatres and music halls in the city, whose prices of admission do not bear favourable comparison.[43]

The details of the Limited Liability proposal reveal that Pickard held the lease of the building from the owner, Archibald Blair, for a further fourteen years at an annual rent of £570. Under the terms of the proposed agreement, Pickard assigns the lease to the new company, which effectively buys him out of the business for the sum of £10,500. However £3000 of this payment is stipulated to be in shares, and he remains in charge of the business as Managing Director at an agreed yearly salary of £250 per annum for a period of five years.[44]

The effect of the agreement would have been to release a substantial amount of Pickard's capital for him to reinvest in other projects, while allowing him to retain a substantial interest in the Panopticon. Whether or not the issue actually generated the capital intended is unclear: a subsequent brief notice in *The World's Fair* on 9 July titled 'New Limited Company', reported that 'the Glasgow Panopticon (Ltd) has been registered to acquire the business now carried on at the Panopticon … Capital

£12,000 in £1 shares', before finishing 'Subscribers: A.B.[*sic*] Pickard'. Had Pickard then bought the shares himself—either as stunt, or because no one else took them up? If he did fail to raise the capital intended, the limited liability company nevertheless brought benefits, not least in leaving Pickard, as an employee of the new concern, less financially exposed in the event of the business getting into financial problems.

The flotation was in any case followed by a spate of dynamic activity. In August, less than two months later, Pickard opened the Ibrox Cinematograph at Lendl Place, Ibrox, a 900-seat cinema. This was followed in October 1911 by the Casino in Townhead, and in 1914 by the 1900-seat Seamore in Maryhill Road.

Pickard had previously bought the Gaiety Theatre, Clydebank, in 1908 and, after alterations, reopened it offering twice-nightly pictures and variety turns. However by 1910, a pivotal year for Pickard, it was increasingly evident that film was the most cost-effective and profitable medium, and purpose-built cinemas were beginning to proliferate. Many of the first generation of pioneering fairground exhibitors, notably the Kemps and Greens, were in the process of transferring their touring cinematographs into permanent venues.[45] Pickard was clearly anxious to expand into this lucrative market and in 1910 he switched the Panopticon, which had featured bioscopes on its bills since Hubner's time, over to cinema but retaining live acts alongside films. While he continued to offer this combination of variety and films at the four principal theatres he owned during the First World War, and at others well into the 1930s, his two purpose-built venues, the Casino and Seamore, were cinemas rather than adapted theatres like the Panopticon and Clydebank Theatre. Pickard's later additions—the Black Cat in Bridgeton (1921), White Elephant in Shawlands (1927) and Norwood in St Georges Road (1936)—were straightforward cinemas.[46]

By later life, Pickard had amassed an extensive portfolio of properties in the West End and South Side of Glasgow. Shortly before his death in 1964 he was in protracted legal dispute with members of his family over ownership of around 300 properties, which Pickard claimed he had given his children to hold in trust for him.[47] It seems that this considerable wealth was generated by investing the profits from his theatre and cinema businesses in property, which he bought cheap, when markets were low, and rented out. While he certainly made mistakes, Pickard seems to have been highly successful in opening and establishing new cinemas which he benefited from operating himself before selling them on to rival managements.[48] What is apparent from this process is that the criteria for his

involvement in entertainment businesses were strictly financially based, and marked a drift away from speculation on theatrical ventures and into property. It marked a move away from the ethic of the embourgeoised impresario, who at some level had a stake in the future of live entertainment, to that of the property speculator.

This may not have been unusual. But it marks a distinct difference from the previous generation of managers, and puts Pickard at a different relation to the world and climate of improvement that had informed their perspective. While impresarios like H.E. Moss and Oswald Stoll were credited with introducing corporate financial structures into music hall, they were also both sons of music hall managers, and products of music hall's entrepreneurial milieu: infused with a belief in the moral basis for an improved 'respectable' entertainment, they were prepared to invest in extravagantly decorated venues to purvey it. However Pickard's interest in popular theatre and amusements was solely as a means of generating funds for investment. As such he embodied a more modern, developed stage of capitalist investor, one for whom the entertainment itself carried little intrinsic interest beyond its potential to enrich. For this reason, Pickard seems less an exclusively theatrical impresario than those managers previously mentioned. For all his considerable creativity and ingenuity as a showman, he was essentially a salesman, who found new ways of persuading the public into accepting the entertainment that he purveyed. And the means of doing this was the showman's idea of novelty or surprise.

Several recent writers, most notably Tracy Davis, have explored nineteenth-century theatre forms in relation to cultural capital, the means by which the intellectual properties of theatrical performances, productions and materials could be reused to achieve added value.[49] In contrast, Pickard's progress at the Panopticon, and particularly following his dynamic period from 1906 to 1910, could broadly be seen as a process of extraction, one which involved recycling older tropes of rural amusements selected on the basis of cheapness—fairground stunts, amateur nights, waxworks, 'living wonders' or freaks. What was missing was any longer term notion of renewal, or cultural reinvestment in the theatre itself, the only sense of this coming from the community associations of the amateur nights, although the exploitative aspect of these makes even this questionable. The exception to this was that Pickard, usually for his own promotional purposes, did regularly utilise and go out of his way to sustain the populist appeal of the Panopticon as a working-class 'people's' resort.

Pickard's Populism

If his theatre presentations were tightly controlled financially, Pickard retained a showman's predilection for grand populist gestures, and for opportunities that allowed him to project himself as sharing an identity of interests with his working audiences. This brand of self-interested populism was evident in two traits: the use of press coverage to heighten the impression of the Panopticon being at the centre of contemporary debates and controversies, of whatever was culturally of the moment; and, second, the identification of the Panopticon with the working-class communities who formed its audiences. Reflecting this, Pickard's own image was constantly shifting between unpredictable maverick showman and no-nonsense, paternalistic community leader and man of the people who could be relied upon to provide value for money for working people.

An example of Pickard's opportunism and determination to keep the Panopticon at the heart of popular discourse was the appearance of Carry A. Nation, the Kansas saloon smasher, in December 1908.[50] A veteran Prohibitionist campaigner, Nation had earned her uncompromising reputation for countering the demon alcohol by setting about licensed premises with a hatchet, and had reputedly been arrested more than thirty times.[51] At nearly six feet tall, weighing 180lbs and dressed from head to toe in black, even in her sixties Nation cut a formidable figure and news that her mission to Scotland was to include a visit to Glasgow filled the city's press with anticipation. Arriving at Queen's Street station from Edinburgh on Monday 15 December, accompanied by members of the Scottish Prohibition Party, she held a series of public meetings in the City Hall, before undertaking further engagements over the weekend, culminating in a public lecture at the Panopticon on the Sunday evening.[52] The dramatic description of this event in *The World's Fair*—which I will quote from at some length for reasons which will become apparent—reported that, although advertised to begin at 6.30 pm, by four o'clock crowds were already making their way to the Trongate:

> By five o'clock it was necessary for the chief constable to dispatch a brigade of gentlemen in blue, under the command of inspectors and sergeants, in order to regulate the traffic, the Trongate at this hour being a mass of humanity all eager to gain admission as soon as the doors opened.

At six o'clock the crowds outside were 'in excess of the capacity of the hall', with long queues forming 'but still they came from all directions':

By 6.15 further squadrons were requisitioned from the Central Police Station to regulate the crowd and traffic, for trams had been held up for fully half an hour owing to the dense mass which was so anxious to get in if it was only to get a glimpse of the notorious Bar Wrecker. At 6.30 Mr Pickard instructed his staff who were in readiness, to pass the waiting crowds through the turnstiles, thus preventing any rush, disorder or panic, and great praise is due to his men for the able manner in which they handled the crowd. By 6.45 it was necessary to post up 'House Full', much to the disappointment of thousands of people who would have liked to gain admission.

At seven o'clock sharp the sacred concert commenced. It was not until eight o'clock that Mrs Nation arrived in Mr Pickard's motor car, having been detained at the Primitive Methodist Church, Alexandria Parade, where she had been lecturing that evening. Her arrival was signalled by cheers and hooting from the crowds outside, and some difficulty was experienced as the police tried to keep the crowds back, while the motor car was run up the side of the Panopticon. A few minutes later the sprightly old lady was on the platform, and here another ovation was in store for her. Carry bowed her acknowledgements and with a smile upon her face and a bible in her hand she addressed the crowded meeting, explaining how she started her crusade against drink, how she smashed the saloons in the states, and what induced her to visit her cousins on this side of the 'Herrin pond'. She described her experience in Scotland, where she had seen women and children half-clad and foodless, which were the results of that hellish curse drink. At the conclusion of her lecture she thanked Mr Pickard and the audience for the cordial welcome she had received, and hoped she might be spared a visit to the old 'Brit' again shortly. She left the mass outside, as she journeyed along to her hotel. We have it on good authority from some of the oldest inhabitants of the Trongate that this was the largest gathering ever witnessed in this part of the city.[53]

While the account gives a vivid, theatrically charged sense of the occasion, reports in other papers suggest that in most respects the scale and momentousness of the Panopticon event are greatly exaggerated. The *Glasgow Herald* coverage put it firmly in the context of 'a busy sabbath' that had seen Mrs Nation address three other groups that day, referring only to 'a crowded meeting at Pickard's Museum', before quoting some extracts from her comments.[54] The *Evening News* and *Evening Times* reiterated the brief reference to 'a crowded meeting'.[55] Only the *Daily Record* came close to corroborating the *World Fair* report, confirming that people had gathered in the vicinity of the Panopticon from five o'clock, and that when Nation arrived, 'the services of the police were necessary to enable her to enter the building'.[56] But the more dramatic aspects of the *World's Fair* report—the 'mass of humanity' and crowd of thousands, police

reinforcements sanctioned up to Chief Constable level, trams delayed by the blockage of the Trongate, and the 'largest gathering ever witnessed' in that part of the city—seem to have been in the large part invented showman's hyperbole. Perhaps the key to their origin lies in the prominent role assigned to Pickard himself, portrayed as commanding and co-ordinating the public order aspect of events. Moreover the mention of Mrs Nation arriving in Pickard's car, and of the thanks addressed to him at the conclusion, allow the impression that he was promoting her appearance. In fact the *Record* states that it was organised by the Independent Order of Good Templars, and presided over by a Parish Councillor.[57] (It also stated that Mrs Nation travelled there by 'taxi-cab'.) So the meeting was in fact a straightforward Sunday hire, which Pickard tried to turn to his advantage by seeking to claim proprietorial kudos, both for himself and for the hall, whose former name, the 'old "Brit"', gets a valedictory mention at the end of the report, as if to advertise its continued presence at the heart of city life.

If the Carry Nation episode reflected Pickard's desire to depict the Panopticon at the centre of events, the relationship was probably more reciprocal than the pious rhetoric of some temperance reformers might suggest. In fact music halls had long played a role in popular political and religious discourse.[58] Carry Nation may, as reported, have caused amusement among the Alexandra Parade Primitive Methodists when she announced 'I see, dear friends, my time is up to go to the Panopticon',[59] but in the context of her wider mission she probably needed the hall and its audience as much as it needed her. For all that her Glasgow visit had attracted considerable press attention, it had not been conspicuously successful in drawing the public. Her initial City Hall meeting only attracted 'a small attendance of 500 people'. And although the stormy events that ensued, in which the prohibitionist Councillor Scrymgeour of Dundee denounced other factions of the temperance movement from the platform, to furious protestations from the floor, had provided some lurid headlines, the chaotic spectacle it projected did little to promote wider public interest.[60] Nor did Mrs Nation's daytime walkabouts, which saw her lead her supporters, hotly pursued by reporters and the public, on sorties to confront those engaged in the spirits trade. Visits to bars like Lauder's in Renfield Street and restaurants such as The Rogano, where she attempted to persuade managers and female employees to renounce the wickedness of their occupation, usually prior to being ejected, were met with polite bewilderment.[61] But if the misfiring of these stunts and

Mrs Nation's bizarre Old Testament turn of phrase left the Glasgow public bemused, her extrovert, confrontational style was probably better suited to the more direct environs of the Panopticon.

The fact that many who turned out to see her in the Trongate probably did so to protest against her views was very much to the point. As a natural self-promoter whose idiosyncratic behaviour belied a keen commercial sense (which included selling miniature hatchets to raise funds), Carry Nation herself was nothing if not a provocateur. In her tumultuous American career she had extensive experience of preaching her 'gospel of prohibition' in the rough and ready surroundings of vaudeville, where the primitive revivalism of her brand of 'muscular christianity', with its jokiness and physicality, had evidently thrived.[62] For this reason she apparently requested bookings on the rowdier vaudeville theatres.

Pickard himself fully appreciated the commercial value of political controversy as a box office attraction. In the week of Mrs Nation's appearance his headline draw was 'Hunnable, of Jarrow election fame', a failed political candidate, who was probably as anxious to profit from his brief celebrity as Pickard was to exploit it. This he did by taking out box adverts in the *Evening News*, among those for missionary groups and benevolent societies, boldly titled 'Anti-socialism', which advised that Hunnable would 'lecture daily at 2, 4, 7 and 9' (the scheduled times of the variety performances).[63] The object was to flag up the contentiousness of the lecture and its demagogic nature in order to capitalise on the audience for such political addresses.

The populist, anti-establishment tone of Nation's mission chimed perfectly with the Panopticon's counter-cultural role. From Pickard's perspective, the fact that she was widely decried, being a hate figure for sections of the working classes, guaranteed controversy, which in turn translated into a promotional opportunity. Carry Nation's impact in Scotland was such that she remained a bugaboo for the working-class popular imagination for some period. The Scotch comic Jock Mills made a recording of a song, 'Carrie Nation', which celebrated what was portrayed as her daftness, the central patter suggesting that he would like to see her try and take the pint away from a thirsty navvy at closing time. (On retiring from the stage Mills ran a successful bar in the Cowcaddens.)

Pickard used Carry Nation to tap into controversy surrounding the temperance movement. But another scheme which made great play of a different sort of populist appeal—his theatres' community associations and solidarity with working audiences—was the special Holiday excursion that

Pickard organised for 1500 trippers to Blackpool in July 1910. Coinciding with the start of Glasgow Fair, this offered a return rail trip to Blackpool for the special price of 7/6 (half price for children), which also included free admission to Blackpool Tower and its associated attractions—'the theatre, aquarium, ballroom, aviary, bear pits, monkey house, China Town and roof garden', as well as a free ascent of the tower itself. Leaving at midnight in order to deliver a full eighteen hours in Blackpool, the *World's Fair* reported the departure of the 1500 trippers in triumphal terms:

> It was 12.30 on Sunday night when the two long trains steamed out of the Central Station, Glasgow, amidst prolonged cheers from large crowds who had come to see their friends off. As the train steamed out the beautiful skirl of the bagpipes could be distinctly heard in the dead of the night, for Mr. Pickard had arranged for six Highland pipers in full dress uniform to accompany the trip. During the journey Mr. Pickard, accompanied by two of his staff, kept vigil over his care, making frequent enquiries as he passed from corridor to corridor as to their comfort. The trippers reached Blackpool at six o'clock in the morning when, after enjoying a hearty breakfast, they proceeded to the Tower, headed by Mr. Pickard and pipers. Great was the amusement when the visitors entered the zoological section—the pipers playing 'The Campbells are Coming'—when the monkeys gave one shriek and bounded to the utmost of the trees. The lions, tigers, jaguars and leopards were spell-bound, whereas the hyenas stopped laughing whilst the pipers walked round the hall several times, and it was fully ten minutes after the pipers had left that the animals got over the shock the invaders had given them.[64]

The day continued with an ascent of the Tower, followed by dinner, fraternization with local 'Lancashire lads and lassies', rinking at the Colosseum and 'a good dance at the Tower ballroom', before catching the train back to Glasgow at twenty past midnight. The trip was declared a great success, with 500 people paying the surcharge to stay on for a longer visit. Pickard received three hearty cheers at the station, the *World's Fair* claiming the excursion arranged through the Caledonian Railway Co. was 'considered to be the record trip of any ever organised by a private enterprise in Scotland'.

The excursion was so popular that it was repeated the following year, when Pickard publicised its purpose in the local Blackpool newspaper. An article terming him 'the Barnum of the North', called the trip 'the greatest Scottish invasion ever known in the annals of this favourite seaside resort'.[65]

Both events—Carry Nation's Panopticon meeting and the 'gigantic' excursions to Blackpool—show Pickard at his most expansive in his role as 'the enterprising Glasgow amusement caterer', a creature of his own promotional imagination. As ever with Pickard, we don't quite know what to believe. Did the Carry Nation meeting really unfold on the scale described, with traffic halted and record crowds in the Trongate? The fact that other papers did not report the event—at a working-class hall on a Sunday night—does not necessarily preclude the World's Fair report from being largely accurate. Beneath the suspicion that its colourful reportage bears all the hallmarks of Pickard's own involvement is an awareness of a possible alternative narrative: that many events at the Panopticon anyway went unreported in the Glasgow press; that those who witnessed the scenes in the Trongate knew whether it was true or not; and that the report in the *World's Fair*, a weekly showman's paper which had the space for such retrospective accounts, might represent a description of an event which otherwise fell below the radar of the city press.

The success of the Blackpool excursions seems more quantifiable; the second trip reportedly attracting 1642 participants, 150 of them from Clydebank, where Pickard had the New Gaiety Theatre. But for all the effusive bonhomie of the reporting, such excursions were of course commercial promotions, which involved negotiating rates and excursion trains from the Caledonian Railway company, and which stretched the organisation and staff of Pickard's theatres, both in cross-promoting and selling tickets for weeks in advance, and on the day itself, when Pickard's team of managers were all pressed into service. (On the 1911 excursion the first train was in the charge of Major George Mitchell, 'an outstanding figure being clad in Highland garb'.) Yet Pickard, who organised trips and works outings for his theatres' staffs, clearly enjoyed the excursions and the publicity and promotion they entailed. By echoing the less ambitious Victorian day-excursions of recent memory, they represented a combination of an older style of activity organised on a new larger commercial scale, the notion of something familiar being given a dynamic new makeover that was to become a Pickard trait.

Modernity and Tradition

From the turn of the twentieth century technological change began having a profound impact on aspects of commercial entertainments. From a show perspective, the combination of traditional carved gilt, and new

mechanically powered rides, such as steam yachts and scenics, produced a golden age of fairground machinery between 1906 and 1912. Coin-operated slot-machines and automata seemed to offer potential for extended opening hours and correspondingly enlarged profits, to the alarm of some involved in licensing. The new prevalence of city centre arcades featuring mechanical amusements also seemed set to redraw the line between passive spectatorship and active participation. Magistrates' fining of an 'automatic vaudeville', or arcade, in Argyle Street offering peep-shows, moving figures, phonographs and fortune-telling machines, for unlicensed Sunday opening brought an appeal challenging whether such machines constituted a public show within the meaning of the Glasgow Police (Further Powers) Act, 1892. In response, the Justiciary Appeal Court accepted that there was no entry charge, and that the public did not have to put a coin in the machines if they did not want to. However it found that the premises, which had had the whole front wall taken out to increase access to the street, were open for 'no other purpose that to give show entertainment', and that, as the public 'were free to enter, but only free to occupy it if they took entertainment and paid for it', the 'place was opened solely to induce people to pay for entertainment to eye and ear.'[66] The automatic vaudeville in question contained 50 phonographs, 54 mutoscopes, 10 combined phonograph and picture machines, two strength-testing machines, three electrical machines and one weighing machine.[67]

Pickard himself epitomises the contradiction between modernity and tradition. Acutely aware of changing fashions in showmanship and audience spectatorship, a series of scrapbooks that have recently come to light, part of his office archive, show Pickard took great pains to stay abreast of the latest developments, and kept extensive press cuttings charting developments such as the rising popularity of roller-skating, and whole albums devoted to coverage of major public exhibitions such as the Franco-British exhibition at White City and the Scottish National Exhibitions. He was also a very public champion of the latest technologies, encouraging aviation by offering '£20 to the first airman who, in a Scottish-built machine, alights on Glasgow Green, flying from a point outside the city'.[68]

Yet if Pickard was a keen exponent of technological innovations, in the case of the Panopticon their application sometimes had the effect of ghosting formats previously encountered in a live context. While the Auxetophone of February 1908 offered La Tetrazzini's 'Bell Song' from *Lakmé*, it also played records of Harry Lauder singing 'Stop yer 'ticklin'

Jock', and Andrew Black's vigorous rendering of 'The March of the Cameron Men'. A Britannia Cinematographe in the early 1900s similarly featured film of Little Tich performing his most famous routines.

Fifteen or twenty earlier Little Tich and Lauder had appeared in person on the Britannia stage, yet by the early 1900s, unaffordable as live acts, their performances were mechanically reproduced in the same auditorium through the horn of a phonograph or in flickering Cinematograph images. While the audience were reduced from participation to passive spectatorship, such developments marked a stage in music hall's self-referential turn.

If the reproduction of still-current performers as mechanical attractions before a paying public that had been used to seeing them live seemed eerily reflexive, other technological applications lent themselves to more inclusive, democratic impulses that better reflected music hall's celebratory, community basis. Photography had featured in fairground contexts for some years. A photograph of the turreted and flagged entrance to Green's Vinegar Hill fairground published in the *World's Fair* in the early 1900s was credited 'Caddick', a reference to Caddick's American Studio, a photography attraction that toured Scottish fairgrounds.[69] Resident at the Old Barrack Carnival in 1900 its combination of an expanding technology housed in an elaborately carved and painted showman's caravan typified the transitional stage of developments.[70] By the 1920s Pickard was photographing audiences at his children's film screenings, slyly ensuring that the young subjects had to attend for several weeks before receiving their free copy, which, usually indecipherable, featured 'hundreds of white faces against a background of Stygian darkness'.[71]

Topicals—short films of local subjects, shot for the manager by companies that specialised in quick turnaround—were another device used to boost audiences. By publicising the filming schedule and advertising that the film would be screened at the Panopticon the same night, whole families could be guaranteed to attend the hall, in the hope of seeing a husband, wife, brother or son appearing in, for example, the stream of people captured parading past the camera on a busy Sunday afternoon on Glasgow Green. In March 1909 the Panopticon's topicals, reportedly taken by Pickard's 'Own operators', were titled 'The Invasion of Britain—showing how Invaders would be repulsed', and featuring 'Glasgow's great army of Territorials' on manoeuvres in Kelvingrove Park, Charing Cross and George Square.'[72] Not all subjects were upbeat: in 1908 they featured 'The Unemployed Demonstration in George Square.'[73] In another example, which synthesised the new technologies with older forms, he filmed

the marriage of his current freak attraction, Pickard's 'Giant', whose best man was Tom Thumb, advertising that the film would be on show at the Panopticon the same evening.

Film also proved sympathetic to the hall's longstanding cultural ambience and sense of community involvement in promoting sporting associations. Pickard had previously encouraged live sporting events, and in 1908 revived a formerly highly popular form by announcing the Amateur Clog-dancing competition for the championship of Scotland. However from the First World War period his initiatives to attract working-class audiences involved showing films of important sporting events: world championship boxing, international football matches, and classic horse races such as the Grant National. Attempting to replicate the sense of sporting occasion, his advertisements stressed the exclusivity of the presentations: so in 1913 Pickard 'held on to the Carpenter Wells fight for another week', and in 1916 'secured the first exhibition in Glasgow of the entire fight from start to finish' of the World Heavyweight Championship contest between Jess Willard and Jack Johnson (Fig. 5.7). Such marketing resonated with an older sporting culture that had previously felt at home in the

Fig. 5.7 The Two World's Champions,' Jack Johnson and AE Pickard, c.1911 (Britannia Panopticon Music Hall Trust)

music hall through the inclusion of wrestling, clog-dancing contests and demonstration boxing displays. Although boxing was now largely respectable, sleazier associations periodically resurfaced. In 1913 Johnson, a controversial figure, was prevented from appearing at two London halls by a Variety Artists Federation resolution condemning 'engagements based on unsavoury notoriety rather than abilities as a legitimate performer'.[74]

A highpoint of this revived sporting culture was Pickard's presentation in January 1910 of Jem Mace, a famous bareknuckle pugilist of an earlier era, who was billed as 'The hero of one hundred fights at Pickard's Panopticon', having last appeared at the hall twenty-two years before. An ex-heavyweight champion of the world, now in his seventy-ninth year, Mace came with a 'troupe of lady athletes and gentleman boxers'. But at the Friday evening performance Pickard pulled off an extra coup which the *World Fair* insisted 'eclipsed anything that has ever been seen on any stage'. After persuading Mace to play the violin for the packed house, he announced another surprise for his patrons:

> He had arranged with the champion all-round athlete of the world—another old veteran—namely, Donald Dinnie, to meet Jem Mace on the Panopticon stage, and here we saw the two old champions shake hands before an enthusiastic audience. Cheer upon cheer arose as these two heroes clasped each others hands.[75]

The unexpected appearance of the granite-hewn Dinnie, a famous strongman and iconic figure in Highland games heavy sports, provided a perfect Scottish sporting equivalent to the bareknuckle Victorian Mace and stirred a genuine frisson in the audience.[76] Pickard made a speech in which he saluted the two great champions and remarked on the momentousness of the event, 'an occasion which might never arise again to see two of the oldest veterans of the sporting world on the stage together'. He wished both veterans every success, and 'sincerely hoped that it would not be the last time they would visit the Old Brit, namely the Panopticon (Cheers)' After presenting the two men with inscribed gold medals ('the cheering was deafening'), the orchestra struck up Auld Lang Syne as the company on stage with crossed hands 'sang the old Scotch song, the audience rising to join them.'

> It was, as Mr Pickard had previously said, a sight of a lifetime. Donald Dinnie, in his magnificent Highland costume with his breast covered with medals, and the erect stature of old Jem in his evening costume—he looked more like some great statesman about to deliver an address than the hero

of a thousand battles. The whole thing was a great spectacle; magnificent; in fact, something that we can never forget, and an historical event which will fill another page in the annals of 'The Old Brit'—Pickard's Panopticon.

The intertwining evocation of past sporting glories with collective folk memories of the 'Old Brit' show Pickard as the real virtuoso here. This self-referential approach to the venue, amounting to a conscious writing and recycling of its own history, became increasingly pronounced from the immediate pre-First World War period. It seems to have corresponded to the end of Pickard's serious efforts to transform the Panopticon into a modern venue, and therefore represents an acceptance that the weight of its past associations was now the factor that could be most advantageously packaged or capitalised on in future development.

One of the upshots of this more relaxed acceptance of, or settling for, its inherited cultural capital, was the cultivation of more populist, community-minded participatory entertainments, most notably the Panopticon's amateur nights, which remained hugely popular well into the 1930s, and at which the audience were known to vent their displeasure at inferior acts by pelting them with rotten fruit and vegetables, sold by vendors to audiences entering the building. By 1928, when the hall was promoting 'The Panopticon Gigantic Beauty competition to find the prettiest girl in Scotland' (Fig. 5.8), its marketing was heavily driven by nostalgia for what its handbill terms, in an avalanche of slogans, 'Ye Good Olde Panopticon', 'Situated in the Historic Trongate', 'Now in Full Swing', 'The Talk of the City', 'The Birthplace of Moving Pictures', 'Going Stronger than ever'.[77]

In concluding, Pickard's management of the Panopticon seems to chart the working-through of an older entertainment value system, which gradually declined over the course of a generation—between the 1900s and 1930s—in the face of social change and technological innovation. Yet a striking aspect of the protracted and varied manner of this decline is that, for all its vicissitudes and idiosyncrasies, it also seems to embody a resistance to the narrative of inevitability that marks most accounts of the coming of cinema.

Pickard was a different type of manager to the impresarios responsible for syndicated variety, the product of a historical moment when urban entertainments offered the prospect of substantial capital return. Stoll and Moss's system for financing variety was predicated on monopolising the top end of the market in order to guarantee return on their investment. As second generation managers, their vision included a strong element

Fig. 5.8 'Panopticon Gigantic Beauty Competition', 1928 (By kind permission of the Britannia Panopticon Music Hall Trust)

of socio-economic aspiration that involved transforming music hall into a simulacrum of a respectable Victorian/Edwardian industry, with all its attendant connotations of longevity, capital and material substance. Pickard, although a natural showman, was essentially, like Barnum, a businessman, an opportunistic entrepreneur who saw entertainment as a vehicle for capitalist speculation. His activities centred on identifying where the potential capital value lay in each area of his operations, and developing or extracting it.

In this respect, of an entrepreneurial manager working with the assets he has, the Panopticon provides an alternative working financial model of capital management to that of Moss Empires, one based on an under-resourced independent hall occupying a position at the bottom of its local market, playing to working-class audiences, operating on small profit margins and with minimal investment in films and performers, advertising or infrastructure, which yet managed to survive beyond expectancy well into the era of the talkies. In its survival, and the diversity of entertainments it offered, the Panopticon provides proof of the viability—and survival—of a far more diverse choice of urban entertainments.

Pickard had to compete for his working-class audiences against not only music halls, theatres and cinemas, but also a resurgent commercial fairground culture that, at its height with steam yachts in the pre-World War I period, was well-placed to deliver exciting rides and large-scale spectacle in city-centre showgrounds. Unable to match his rivals for quality or value, Pickard resorted to idiosyncratic showman's marketing to shift public discussion to grounds of entertainment—rather than monetary—value, and by promoting an image of himself as a pied-piper or people's caterer, managed to sustain a position at the lower end of the market. The message of this personal branding was that, with Pickard, you never knew what you were going to get: while subliminally the public doubtless recognised that the entertainment—be it film, or music hall—was never first rate (it was never promised that it would be), it was never boring. On a personal level, Pickard cultivated just the sort of studiedly calculated ambiguity that Barnum's aesthetic advocated: stories about canniness and meanness to the authorities—paying a £20 parking fee in ha'pennies and making the desk sergeant count out every coin and supply a receipt—were countered by others implying a heart of gold. People thought they knew him, but didn't at all.

Pickard transferred ownership of the Panopticon to his son Peter in 1935. In 1938 Pickard sold the building to his tailors, a company called

Weaver to Wearer, who stripped the seating from the stalls area, and built a pitch-roofed structure across between the balconies, effectively sealing off the upper part of the auditorium from the lower area, which has since been utilised as a stockroom, workroom and storage space for a variety of concerns that have occupied the premises. However, the music hall has survived, and represents a source of continuity for the people who remember attending performances there in the 1920s and 1930s. In 2004 the ceiling was removed, revealing the full height of the auditorium for the first time since 1938.

Under Pickard the Britannia, reinvented as the Panopticon, briefly enjoyed a new lease of life as a carnivalesque entertainment centre that incorporated an urbanised response to older fairground entertainments. In contrast to previous managers, who had been required to adopt the rhetoric of moral improvement, Pickard was characteristic of a later type of manager, 'the new recreational entrepreneur [who] encouraged workers to abandon restraint and succumb to their desires for the new leisure pursuits on offer'.[78] Subsequently, in the interwar period, his determination to wring every last drop of commercial worth out of the Panopticon resulted in the unlikely extension of its life as a live venue, not by design, but simply because the low-budget cine-variety that occupied its final years, and the amateur nights for which it was famous, happened to represent the cheapest content on which it could operate as a profitable concern. When the commercial value of the site exceeded the profit generated by its combination of cinema and variety business, he sold it. While Pickard's interests in the theatre were purely commercial, the Panopticon's clientele nevertheless came to regard it as a community asset, an aspect of its history that lives on in public memory, and which we will explore in the next chapter.

Notes

1. Frank Bruce, 'Songs, Sketches and Modern Life: Scottish Comedians 1900–1940', *Theatre Notebook* 1999, vol. LIII, no. 2, 74–95, here 74.
2. Peter Bailey, 'Theatres of Entertainment/Spaces of Modernity: Rethinking the British Popular Stage 1890–1914', *Nineteenth Century Theatre*, 26:1 (Summer 1998), 5–24, here 6.
3. David Harvey, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985): 256, quoted in Bailey, '*Theatres of Entertainment*', 7.
4. Neil Munro, 'Erchie at the Frivolity', first published *Glasgow Evening News*, 4 April 1904, in *Erchie My Droll Friend*, ed. Brian D. Osborne and Ronald Armstrong (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2002), 224.

5. Tracy C. Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage*, *1800–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 162.

6. *Glasgow Programme & Exhibition Journal*, 17 Jun.1901, 3; advertisements, *World's Fair*, 8 Jun.1912, & 4 Mar. 1911, 8. 'Savage South Africa', a similar dramatic re-enactment of episodes from the Boer War conflict, featured a real armoured train, supplied by the North British Railway Co., the Battle of Pardekraal, the surrender of Cronje, and, as a finale, the march past of the Gordon Highlanders and their defeated Boer prisoners. *Showman*, 25 Jan. 1901, 67.

7. *Showman*, 10 May 1901, 309; Perilla and Juliet Kinchin, *Glasgow's Great Exhibitions 1888*, *1901*, *1911*, *1938*, *1988* (Wendlebury, Oxon: White Cockade, 1988), 90–2.

8. Vanessa Toulmin, '"Curios Things in Curios Places": Temporary Exhibition Venues in the Victorian and Edwardian Entertainment Environment', *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 4:2 (July 2006), 113–37, here 121.

9. *Showman*, 18 Jan. 1901, 51; 25 Jan. 1901, 67.

10. This movement, emanating from the study of fairground amusements and popular scientific and visual culture, centres on the journals *Living Pictures* and its successor *Early Popular Visual Culture*, and the related series of conference proceedings, published as *Visual Delights*.

11. 'Mr AE Pickard the Well-Known Amusement Caterer', *Glasgow Programme*, c.1910. Panopticon Papers BP 20.47.

12. Old Harry of Bridgeton, *Glasgow Eastern Standard*, 13 Jun. 1925, 7.

13. Harry Lauder, *Roamin' in the Gloamin'* (London: Lippincott, 1928), 71.

14. The advert in the *Glasgow Programme* of 2 May 1904 titles the premises 'Fell's Waxworks & Variety Exhibition'. In the 9 May issue, presumably denoting his acquisition of the business, it was titled 'Pickard's Waxworks & Variety Exhibition'. However on 16 May it had become the 'World's Fair Waxworks, late Fell's'; by 10 Oct. it was 'Pickard's American Museum & Grand Waxwork'.

15. 'Pickard's British Museum, Waxwork and Zoo, Trongate, Glasgow. Catalogue' Glasgow Museums and Galleries, People's Palace collection. Interview with Harry Hill (2), 5.6.04.

16. Tom Norman, *The Penny Showman*: *Memoirs of Tom Norman*, *The Silver King* (private, 1985).

17. Pickard's British Museum Catalogue, no. 1033, p. 18.

18. Interview with William Gray, 29.9.03

19. Vanessa Toulmin, *Pleasureland*s (Sheffield and Hastings: National Fairground Archive/Projection Box, 2003), 46, 57.

20. Interview with Joe Lindsay, 13.3.04.

21. Letter, Glasgow, 17 Aug. 1925, to James Henney, 42 Albert Road, Harthill. By kind permission of Mr Henney's daughter, Mrs Marie Hill. Interview with Marie Hill, 28.1.05.

22. *Showman*, 13 Sep. 1901, 13–14.

23. Davis, *Economics of the British Stage*, 335.

24. Davis, *Economics of the British Stage*, 348.

25. For the Friedlander Correspondence, which includes Friedlander's letters in English to Pickard, see Pickard's Papers entries BP16, Letterbooks 07, 22, 45, 202, 205, 236.

26. 'Tom Thumb le colibri di poche', (1907), Friedlandernummer 4047; 'L'homme poisson. Da Grosste Wunder der Welt. Pickard's Enterprises', (1911), 5370; by Adolf Friedlander, in the Friedlander collection, Cicusarchif Jaap Best, Teylers Museum, Harlaam. www.circusmuseum.nl.

27. *Glasgow Programme*, 16 July 1906.

28. A second penny bought a ride on a real train 'from the Cape to Cairo', passing through Mafeking, Johannesburg, 'and several well-known towns on the route, arriving in Chinatown and the Arabian Palace of Delight'.

29. James W. Cook, *The Arts of Deception: Playing with Fraud in the Age of Barnum* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 103–4.

30. Interview with Harry Hill, 5.6.04.

31. Interview with Bobby Reid, 14.3.05.

32. See Curtis M. Hinsley, 'The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893', in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 344–62. For styles of ethnographic exhibition see Sadiah Qureshi, 'Living Curiosities: Human Ethnological Exhibitions in London, 1800–1855' (unpublished PhD thesis, Cambridge, 2005).

33. *Daily Record and Mail*, 10 Jul. 1906.

34. *Glasgow Programme*, 31 Dec. 1906, 7; *World's Fair*, 7 Dec. 1907, 1.

35. David Prince Miller, *Life of a Showman, to which is added Managerial Struggles, by David Prince Miller, late of the Adelphi Theatre, Glasgow* (Leeds, 1849), 14–15.

36. John McCabe's 1961 book *Mr Laurel and Mr Hardy*, which draws on Laurel's own memories, states that Laurel's debut took place at 'Pickard's Museum', which McCabe describes as 'a fascinating, heterogeneous show place which was at once a side show, museum and penny gallery' and where one could, for a ha'penny, play a gramophone or see a stuffed bear. Any doubt that this is Pickard's Museum and not the Britannia is confirmed by the reference to the auditorium concerned as a 'room of minuscule proportions boasting a tiny stage at one end', where there were no seats, and 'a small ladies' orchestra of three pieces trilled and shrilled, while the patrons stood and watched'. This then was not the Britannia, but the smaller performance space of Pickard's Museum (towards the end of the story it is referred to as 'the Museum Music Hall'). A 1975 book by McCabe, *The Comedy World of Stan Laurel*, offers a different account of the debut, this time by

Laurel's father, Arthur Jefferson, who watched his son perform. In this version it is reported as taking place at 'Pickard's Music Hall', and the story clearly involves a bigger space, with references to 'the hall', front stalls, orchestra, and the lively audience's laughter and applause (the earlier account only mentions his father and 'a few scattered patrons' being present). However this second version, based on an account written retrospectively, seems more anecdotal and generalised, and lacks the specific details which make the first account seem the more convincing. See McCabe, *Mr Laurel and Mr Hardy: An Affectionate Biography* (originally Doubleday, 1961; London: Robson Books edn, 2003), 13, 19–22. McCabe, *The Comedy World of Stan Laurel* (London: Robson Books, 1975), 10–12.

37. *Glasgow Programme*, May 4, 1908, 3, 6; 13 Jun. 1908.
38. *Eagle*, 18 Mar. 1909, 2.
39. *Eagle*, 7 Jan. 1909, 2.
40. … Cardinal of Cowcaddens, Primate of Parkhead, Pontiff of Pollockshaws etc. BP03.63. Scrapbook page.
41. *Prospectus, The Glasgow Panopticon Ltd*, 10 Jun. 1910: The National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive. Ref: 5/8/25.
42. 'Certificate of auditors', Glasgow, 8 Jun. 1910, Taylor & Ireland, Chartered Accountants, *Prospectus, The Glasgow Panopticon Ltd*.
43. *Prospectus, Glasgow Panopticon Ltd*. National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive. Ref: 5/8/25.
44. Andrew Crowhurst states that 'Music hall entrepreneurs frequently took advantage of the legal safeguards provided by limited liability legislation without relinquishing control of their businesses. A substantial proportion of music-hall companies remained "private" long before this category of limited liability company was formally recognised in 1907.' Andrew Crowhurst, 'Big Men and Big Business: The Transition from "Caterers" to "Magnates" in British Music-hall Entrepreneurship, 1850–1914', *Nineteenth Century Theatre*, 25:1 (Summer 1997), 33–59, here 45.
45. By 1915 George Green had ten cinemas. Janet McBain, 'Mitchell and Kenyon's Legacy in Scotland: The Inspiration for a Forgotten Film-making Genre', in *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon: Edwardian Britain on Film* (London: BFI, 2004), ed. Vanessa Toulmin, Simon Popple and Patrick Russell, 113–24, here 114.
46. Bruce Peter, *100 Years of Glasgow's Amazing Cinemas* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), 175–90.
47. Obit., *Glasgow Herald*, 31 Oct. 1964, 13.
48. Of venues previously mentioned, the White Elephant was sold on in 1934, the Seamore in 1935, the Black Cat and Norwood in 1945, and the Casino in 1955.
49. Davis, *Economics of the British Stage*, 334–62.

50. Although Nation's first name is often spelt Carrie, I have preferred Carry, which is used in the titles of a number of biographies, including Nation's autobiography, and as the title of an opera by Douglas Moore, and was the spelling used in the Glasgow press.

51. See Bernard Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia*: *Glasgow and the United States 1820–1920* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1984), 96, 342–43; see Herbert Asbury, *Carry Nation* (New York, 1929); Fran Grace, *Carry A. Nation*, *Retelling the Life* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

52. For visit see *Glasgow Herald*, 14–21 Dec. 1908.

53. *The World's Fair*, 2 Jan. 1909.

54. *Glasgow Herald*, 21 Dec. 1908, 11.

55. The *Glasgow Evening News* reported the meeting being held at the Panopticon, while the *Evening Times*, like the *Herald*, referred to it being at Pickard's Museum, Trongate. Pickard's own advertisement in the *Glasgow Evening News* (19 Dec. 1908, 1) confirms the venue was the former. *Glasgow Evening News*, 21 Dec. 1908, 8; 'Carry at Pickard's', *Evening Times* (*Glasgow Evening Times*), 21 Dec. 1908.

56. *Daily Record and Mail*, 21 Dec. 1908.

57. *Daily Record and Mail*, 21 Dec. 1908.

58. Like theatres, music halls were frequently used for political meetings, particularly by socialist groups and trade unions. As a young I.L.P. member, Edwin Muir recalled going to hear visiting speakers at Sunday evening meetings at the Metropole Theatre in Stockwell Street. See Elspeth King, 'Popular Culture in Glasgow', 142–89, in *The Working Class in Glasgow 1750–1914*, ed. R.A. Cage (Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1987), 181; Edwin Muir, *Autobiography* (London: Hogarth Press, 1954), 121, 123.

59. *Daily Record*, 21 Dec. 1908.

60. 'Mrs Carry Nation in Glasgow. A Lively Reception', *Glasgow Herald*, 15 Dec. 1908.

61. 'Mrs Carry Nation Ejected', *Daily Record and Mail*, 16 Dec. 1908.

62. In her own words, she regarded the stage as 'the largest missionary field in the world. I am fishing. I go where the fish are, for they do not come to me … I found the theatres stocked with the boys of our country. They are not found in churches': Carry A. Nation, *The Use and Need of the Life of Carry A. Nation*, rev. ed. (Topeka, KA: 1909), 270–72, quoted in Frances Grace Carver, 'With Bible in One hand and Battle-Axe in the Other: Carry A. Nation as Religious Performer and Self-Promoter', in *Religion and American Culture*, 9:1 (Winter 1999), 31–65.

63. *Glasgow News* (*Glasgow Evening News*), 14 Dec.1908, 1.

64. *The World's Fair*, 30 Jul. 1910, 1.

65. *Blackpool Herald & Fylde Advertiser*, 11 Jul. 1911. BP04.25 Scrapbook page.

66. *World's Fair*, 27 Jun. 1908, 5.
67. *World's Fair*, 25 Jan. 1908, 8.
68. *Daily Record*, 27 Nov. 1911.
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70. *World's Fair*, 28 Jun. 1906.
71. Albert Kane, *But The Memory Lingers On* (Paisley: James Paton, 1987), 15.
72. *Eagle*, 18 Mar. 1909, 2.
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75. *World's Fair*, 29 Jan. 1910, 14.
76. See David Webster and Gordon Dinnie, *Donald Dinnie*: *The First Sporting Superstar* (Methlick: Ardo Publishing, 1999).
77. Leaflet, Glasgow Panopticon Music Hall Trust collection.
78. Chris Waters, *British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 21–2.

'Paradise for a couple of hours'?: Towards an Oral History of the Panopticon

'Someone says to me "Do you know the Panopticon?" I said, "you mean the "pots and pans?"'
Dan Kelly[1]

Previous chapters have focused on the Britannia as a building, an inert structure but one that we have used as a conduit through which to examine the entertainment culture of the periods during which it operated. To date, these have been in the distant past, the nineteenth century, and first-hand evidence has therefore only been available in written form, through contemporary accounts, journalism, reminiscences and auto-biographies. However this chapter will utilise the special resource that makes the Britannia so valuable: the fact that, in its later incarnation as the Panopticon, it survived as a performing venue—a working cinema and variety theatre—into within living memory. Oral testimony, captured in interviews recorded at the Panopticon, of those who remember attending performances there as children in the late 1920s and 1930s, provides a rich source of recollection and memory; a seam of primary information about what it felt like to come to the hall, what it sounded and smelt like, a series of impressionistic snap-shots through which we can examine the continu-ities and discontinuities with the popular cultures that both preceded and followed it. Moreover, by extension the interviews also offer a glimpse of wider street culture, as experienced by those growing up in Glasgow in the 1920s, the urban context in which the Panopticon functioned.

One of the methodological challenges of the chapter is how to best use this oral material in such a way as to give full rein to its imaginative appeal, whilst avoiding over-reliance on its factual content—in other words avoiding 'the predilection of oral historians to speak of memory in terms of "records" and "spoken documents"', symptomatic of 'a way of speaking about memory that both objectifies it and turns it into a text'.[2] The subjects for the interviews fall roughly into two categories. The first involves testimony from people—at the time of interviewing aged from their seventies to nineties—who visited the Panopticon as children or young people, mostly between the ages of six and seventeen. The second category includes subjects who did not visit the hall themselves, but either had relatives, typically parents, who did, or had family members who were performers and appeared there. In either case, the visit or incident is often memorialised in a family story, the means by which the memory has been transmitted down the generations.

One of my key aims was the need to find a place for memory within historical discourse, one that privileges its special insights without compromising the rigour of the wider project.

In considering this, I have been influenced by developments in several disciplines. In traditional ethnography, the pioneer of recorded testimony, after a period in which critical theory predominated, recent developments have seen moves away from abstraction back to a renewed emphasis on 'the body', based in the physical experience of fieldwork.[3] New methodologies, Dwight Conquerblood asserts, must find reflexive ways of working which allow the voices of those being studied to have equal rights, in what he terms '[a] rethinking of ethnography as primarily about speaking and listening, instead of observing'.[4]

The notion of privileging the sensory, experiential aspects of living within cultures echoes New Historicism's 'history from below' view that a society's culture is demonstrable not in élites, but is rather embodied in the experience and circumstances of working people in their everyday lives: in other words, not articulated but lived.

Moreover, this experiential world has an onus on the physical, corporeal world of flesh and blood: as Patricia Fumerton puts it, 'The *sense* of the everyday is very much caught up in sensuality or physicality'.[5] This clearly has appeal for the study of entertainment. As with the ethnographic developments, it also resonates with the idea that the evidence of Panopticon interviewees represents a view of culture as experienced by a section of society whose testimony does not normally feature in an unmediated context, but who perhaps better embody day to day experience than many formal histories.

Another of New Historicism's traits is a belief that, in reading societies, discontinuities and exceptions to normative values and the study of minority groups offer the most revealing insights. This again suggests resonances with the professional amusement culture that forms part of this study, which combines the appeal of a mainstream form, widely and popularly consumed by society, with the minority insight of, in the context of performers, showpeople and 'freaks', a closed community.

I have discussed these developments in ethnography and New Historicism not because this study falls within their remit, but because they seem to offer parallel currents of thinking, and open up alternative possibilities for this research. If history is embodied in the everyday life of a society, best studied from the perspective of working people, then how better to explore it than through an oral study of entertainment audiences and the day to day workings of popular culture. And if the written 'literary' text has an important role to play in making and defining our view of history, another text, the oral, unwritten one, must also have an important influence in reflecting and possibly forming our social narratives.

Oral historians themselves are increasingly open to new ways of using and interpreting oral sources to take account not just of factual content but of the meanings of processes by which it is gathered. The popular culture historian S.C. Williams has written of the need to move beyond 'a preoccupation with the detailed reconstruction of everyday life, when thick description becomes the sole life-blood of research', to focus instead on 'the way in which meaning is constructed [so that] the manner of the telling is treated as equally important as that which is told'. This allows 'the source to yield its unique value, which lies in the first instance in its expression of culture'.[6]

Williams' emphasis on oral material as an expression of culture is developed by James Fentress and Chris Wickham, who believe that memory is not only subjective, on an individual basis, but also contains important information about shared ideas, beliefs and social mores. As they express it:

> Memory is structured by language, by teaching and observing, by collectively held ideas, and by experiences shared with others. This makes memory social as well.[7]

The concept of social memory is therefore enormously valuable in respect of oral material, in that it supports the authority of oral testimony to speak beyond the immediate experience of the individual on questions of collective beliefs, values and practices pertaining to the period under discussion.

However the most direct methodological influence has been Annette Kuhn's work on cinema audiences of the 1930s. The methodological approach I have adopted was inspired by techniques employed by Kuhn in her study *Everyday Magic*: *Cinema and Cultural Memory*, in which her objective was to explore the under-researched world of the experience of 'social' audience members attending cinema in the 1930s.[8] To transcend the limitations of text/context dualism, Kuhn adopted ethnographic methods, originally derived from media audience research, which in their cultural studies usage are usually termed historical ethnography or 'Ethno-history'.

In analysing interviews with her subjects, Kuhn identifies four discursive registers, 'characteristic tropes of cinema memory', all of which have proved to have resonances for Panopticon interviews. These types are: impersonal discourse, in which the subject consciously assumes an objective third-person tone in recounting past events, attempting to place him or herself at a distance (i.e. as an amateur historian, seeking to add weight to opinions); anecdotal discourse, in many ways its opposite, which portrays events in a stream of highly personalised first-person narratives and places the interviewee as protagonist, at the centre of events; repetitive memory discourse, in which recollections of incidents and situations draw heavily on fixed formulations, and stress the collective and habitual nature of events ('We always used to go to …' etc.); and, finally, the 'past-present' register, in which events from the distant past are continually contrasted with the present state of society.[9]

Drawing on these registers, I have used the oral material to explore three main themes:

The first was the notion of locality, how the Panopticon was perceived as local or familiar, and how that translated into its role in people's lives, and their wider experience of Trongate, Argyle Street, and the immediate locality.

A second theme was the place of children in society of the time. This reflects the fact that many of the interviews regarding the Panopticon are from a child's perspective, albeit reiterated with adult sensibilities, and touching on notions like safety, the attitudes to childrens' relations to adults, and memories of the city from the perspective of childhood.

The third theme deals—in the widest sense—with the world of the imagination. Kuhn suggests that the super suburban cinemas of the 1930s, the 'dream palaces', were heterotopias, in which imagination was untrammelled for the duration of a film like a Fred Astaire musical. While the Panopticon did not compete on the same imaginative level, this section

will explore how, as an older format, and in many ways the antithesis of the modern Hollywood dream factory culture, it continued to offer a more basic entertainment; one that, in the context of the difficult circumstances of people's working lives, nevertheless represented a more basic alter-man-ifestation of the entertainment culture.

The Panopticon

Before exploring the three themes we should first get some idea of the experience of visiting the Panopticon. Victor Walas was aged seventeen in 1931, when he began work as a messenger at a watch repairer in Jamaica Street in Glasgow. Newly arrived in Glasgow from Bellshill, an industrial town in Lanarkshire ten miles away, he set out to explore the city centre:

> This particular day I got a long break which I wangled, and I decided to cross the road from Jamaica Street onto the other corner. There's a big Boots chemist, and I walked down that side and I'd come back the other way. And as I walked down I said to myself, I've walked quite a distance here. I was ready to turn round and I looked across the road and, this is the bit that was comical to me at the time, there's a man standing with a tiled [top] hat on, frock coat, and a waistcoat, blazer, a right … Well that made my day because I had never seen a commissionaire. So after I stood for a while I says, I'll go across the road and find what's on here. As I walked over I didn't want to look at the commissionaire, in case he … he was saying something, but he was probably telling people something on the hall. So I eventually decided to spend a penny or two, I can't remember, it was probably far too much anyway. So I went in, paid my money, but I can't remember how many stairs or whatever, all I can remember is I arrived in this place, dim lit, and before you could even sit down there was a noise going on. And I could see the screen, the film. So I sat down but the noise was worse than the film. And I don't know if there were drunks there or not, but I said to myself, now I'm going to make a point of coming back here again. But the commissionaire was my main point there, I really treated him as a comic. So I eventually came out, had a good look at the place, went up the road back to my work, felt good. And then any other time I got the chance, maybe delivering something, and I had some period to wait, I'd say right, yup, pup, in, paid my money, looked at the commissionaire first. But always done one thing, I always stayed at the opposite side of the road from the commissionaire, so I could get a good frontal view, because I didn't like to go up and stare at him.[10]

Victor Walas's account, delivered from the point of view of someone new to Glasgow, has many characteristics of a memory map, one of a number

of different types of topographical memory talk identified by Kuhn,[11] and combines a highly personalised and selective interpretation of the cityscape, one inflected by associations, with a parallel emotional journey of memory.

While Victor's perspective is that of a young adult, the circumstances of his account—from one newly arrived in the city to embark on his first job—and its rite of passage aspect gives it a fresh, impressionistic appeal that echoes those of children who visited the hall. Not surprisingly, the iconic figure of the commissionaire or doorman which Walas found so striking also loomed large in the imaginative world of children visiting the hall. Betty Thomson, who lived in Cumberland Street in the Gorbals, was around ten when she first went to the Panopticon in 1923:

> what I remember is that we came in the front door, and there was a commissionaire there, with, I don't know if it was tails, but he had a white shirt, and a broad red sash over the shoulder, and his top hat and his waxed moustache, and he called out to the people, you know, gave them all the spiel to get them to come in. And he was a burly man, I remember that.[12]

While the figure of the doorman was comic for Victor Walas, for Betty Thomson he was a function of the hall's marketing. Sam Mitchell (born 1925), remembers him as being 'built like Joe Louis'.[13] A fourth version of the figure comes from William Gray, who was nine when he first visited the Panopticon with his younger brother around 1926. His account makes clear that, whether consciously at the time or subsequently, he attributed the exuberance of the costume to its promotional function.

> [Well] the big thing I always remember was brass. That was how I remember quite a lot. And as you went through there was a big chappie there, in the foyer, and he had a red sort of hunting jacket on and a top hat, because it was all publicity then you know, and the chappie […] it was all publicity, publicity …[14]

The fact that the doorman, a resplendent figure, is sometimes characterised as an exotic popinjay, with comic overtones (Victor Walas), or as an exuberantly dressed piece of promotion (William Gray, Betty Thomson) might imply that children brought up in the urban context of the city centre were better able to read the hall's underlying commercial premise.

Of course it is also possible their recollections are informed by retrospective adult appreciation of the figure's purpose—that he was there to 'sell' the venue to passers by. However in William Gray's case, his

strong memory of the brasswork in the entrance area ('as I say, the thing about it was brass, it seemed to be all brass, you know?'[15]) is perhaps not coincidental to his verdict on the doorman; his abbreviated, stream of consciousness style of narrative–what Kuhn terms its 'characteristically collagist, fragmentary, timeless, even musical, quality'—tends to foreground images and preoccupations in a way which invites their connection.[16] And his identification of the brassiness of the foyer with the underlying purpose of the doorman—as he puts it 'publicity publicity!'—suggest that on some level he appreciated that their purpose—to project or amplify the venue to attract the interest of passers by—was the same.

This notion of the hall gaudily projecting itself onto Trongate is echoed by several interviewees who particularly remember its exterior lighting. Christopher Lee recalls that:

> It was unusually well lit-up because in the foyer, which was painted white, very ornate mirrors, ornately carved around the frame, and a tremendous amount of electric light bulbs, which were never covered of course, to give the maximum effect, so that you could see the Panopticon from all over, this glare when shops were all closed, you know.[17]

Georgina Claxton, who worked in Albion Street in 1931 and passed the Panopticon every day, similarly envisages it as luminescent, recalling 'I think it was very bright, I can always remember it being very bright … I think they must have had lights like an attraction, because I think it opened in the afternoon.'[18] The suggestion is borne out by a photograph of Trongate in the 1920s, (Fig. 6.1) which shows the exterior of the Panopticon with what look like illuminated signs or light boxes mounted on the fascia.

With its electric lights, mirrors and polished brass, the brightly-lit façade matched the elaborate displays of neighbouring shops and department stores for spectacle, the competition casting 'the illuminated window as stage, the street as theatre and the passer-by as audience'.[19] While the purpose was to advertise the hall's presence by making it visible for a considerable distance, the technique also met later aesthetic modernist criteria that 'the foyer must be so open, so gleaming with light that anyone who's thinking of giving the theatre the go-by will think twice and find himself drawn into it'.[20] Ironically, a later photograph of the exterior at night, taken after the building had been sold to a tailor as a commercial premises, achieves an almost opposite effect: it shows the exterior so dominated by an enormous illuminated neon advertisement for the new company affixed

Fig. 6.1   Trongate, Glasgow, c.1920s, with Panopticon (*right*) (Author's collection)

to the façade, that it seems to completely efface the building itself, which slips into ghostly shadow behind its glare.

Moving from the exterior to the remembered interior, it is important to realise that in the memory landscape, recollections of the hall are invariably tied up with the experience and circumstances of the visit, and, most particularly, the people who accompanied them. For William Gray, who was nine at the time, the narrative of his visits to the Panopticon is inevitably tied up with that of his younger brother: indeed William's retelling of his memories develops into a duologue with his brother, who did not wish to take part in an interview, but whom he consulted with before we talked, and who in any case is so closely fused into the time and place as make his presence, from William's point of view, indispensable to the telling of the story.

Int: And so you went in after you'd paid, so you went upstairs?
Well my brother always remembers them going all the way upstairs, you know, to this level. I seem to think I was half way up when I was at the peak point. You seemed to be half way up this sort of row of stairs and you paid on the right hand side, and then you went up a wee bit further, which I suppose to attain this level, and then you came in, you sort of opened the curtain doors, and there you were in. And naturally it would be in darkness at the time, because in these days it was not wholly music hall, there was cinema and the thing, which was fairly common then, too, it became common … in that you er, they had the cinema and then the interval, and in the interval you had these what you said turns …

In this extract William Gray's account shifts register midway through; the first half, mapping the entrance into the hall, traces the journey up the staircase to the point where the curtains part to reveal the auditorium, or at least the darkness, after which the darkness itself is used as a cover for a more generalised explanation of the nature of music hall, at which point the story rather loses focus. This sort of shift serves to affirm that memory-moments have most resonance when recalling a detail or first hand impression. In contrast, Christopher Lee's recollection of entering the auditorium is direct and detailed:

I remember going upstairs and your ticket would be checked just before you reached the auditorium if you like itself, no doors as such, just very very heavy curtains. When you walked through the curtains closed behind you. There was a rail across the back as I remember that people were allowed to stand [at] when there were no seats available …[21]

However for all its precision, the account really comes alive with the introduction of a sensory reference point:

One of the earliest recollections as well was underfoot, because there was always so much litter. Peanuts were sold in shells, most of the people bought peanuts in shells, and the shells were scattered all over the floor. Orange peel, all sorts of things scattered there. I never really saw the balcony, because it was so dark, they had very, very dim lights on either wall and other lights suspended from the balcony down into the auditorium, but very, very dark indeed.[22]

Memories of the Panopticon often, as here, turn on physical sensations or a particular aspect of the visit, the specific instance, pleasurable or otherwise.

Josephine Parkin thinks she was five or six when she was taken to the hall by her older brother, 'plumping off school' in the mid-1930s. Asked what she remembered about these visits, she replies:

> Probably the seating, which was a hard wooden bench which was at the back of the hall, as if it was an inshot [recessed] type of thing, and the smaller people, or younger people, we were lifted up and we were always pushed along to make more room, obviously, for as many people who could come in. And because it was wooden sometimes you could get skelfs [splinters] in your backside, if I can use that word …[23]

The physicality of the seating, which consisted of a combination of benches or forms, and cinema seats, featured in several accounts: Sam Mitchell remembers 'It was all wooden seats … wooden, with nae backs on them.'[24]

Entering the auditorium again, this time from the upper level of the balcony, brings further memory moments and associations. The interviews for this research were held in the stalls level of the surviving Panopticon auditorium, which is situated on the building's first floor. Not surprisingly interviewees were often disorientated by having to enter by a rear access stairway, as it were backwards, the central front staircase from the entrance on Trongate by which they would have originally entered having long been removed. However for Annie Daniels, who remembered the original auditorium as 'pretty dingy—much as it is now', recollections of visiting the hall as a ten-year-old with her brother switch into sharp relief once she has got over her initial disorientation to identify the location of a particular memory. Having gained her bearings, she is then increasingly specific about the particular seats and viewpoint they chose to occupy during their visits.

> We came up a stair like that, up to there.
>   Int: Well you came to here, that's what it was, you came to this level I think …
>   … this level, that's right!
>   Int: And then you could go up …
>   And then there was a stair up, and it was just elderly men that were all sitting round. And I remember when they used to show maybe a Tom Mix picture, and I remember a big coloured man standing at the back, just up there, where there was a door, and he was terribly excited, and he kept shouting out 'come on, shoot him! shoot him!'
>   Int: In the cowboy film?

… in the cowboy film. I remember these things. But, and then we used to go down to the front seats there, my brother and I …

Int: This is in the circle, in the balcony?

This is in the circle in the balcony there, and we always made for the front there, so we could sit there and watch the, we just looked onto the screen there. I can't remember which picture they did show, but it was a cowboy picture. And then you'd have the interval, and this was the highlight of the visit, was to see the amateurs, and people came in either singing or some would do a dance turn, or an acrobatic, and I'm afraid some of them didn't get a very good reception.[25]

While Annie Daniels' remembered the man shouting at the film, for others the particular image around which their memories had crystalised is disturbing. Willie Docherty came up to the Panopticon from Pollockshaws with friends as a fourteen-year-old in the mid-1930s:

I don't remember very much about it except there were two films, and an interval. There was supposed to be a variety show, and obviously it was a family, you know, that provided the variety show. And there were a lot of kids in the family, and they all had rickets. Do you know rickets, do you know what rickets are? Terrible.[26]

Amateur Nights

Like Annie Daniels, Betty Thomson also came to see the amateurs, distinguishing the occasion of the 'amateur night' from the Panopticon's normal fare of films interspersed with live acts.

My dad used to bring me, and then when I got old enough to come myself I came, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. But it was Go As You Please they called it then, nowadays the modern name is karaoke. We had that and then we had a film. But it was great fun, absolutely. […]

The turns as we called them, the acts, some of them didn't want to give up, so [if] people disapproved of them, they let them know. And finally a big pole would come out round … with a clique [cleat, or hook] on the end and took them off. Of course that caused an uproar too.[27]

This use of a hook to pull off amateur performers who outstayed their welcome was one of several famous pieces of urban folklore associated with the Panopticon. While I initially approached reports of the hook's use with

some scepticism, believing it had all the hallmarks of an apocryphal story, a number of interviewees have reported remembering it.[28] Moreover Dan Kelly, whose parents both worked for A.E. Pickard at the Panopticon, his mother being the theatre cashier while his father was the assistant stage manager from the late 1890s to around 1921, recounts of his father's role:

> His job was to stand at the side of the stage with this big pole with a hook, a big hook, and if people threw the fruit and stuff at them that they'd bought outside, he used to (wheek) pull them off the stage…. If people didn't like them, they used to boo them, or buy chipped fruit, there used to be barras outside and they could buy chipped fruit off it, because nothing was wasted then … and they used to bring it in and they used to throw stuff at them …[29]

Dan Kelly's account also includes this second trope of amateur nights at the Panopticon, that the audience threw fruit, if not harder objects like rivets, at the performers. Again, although this is firmly embedded in Panopticon lore, it is sometimes hard to discern at this distance in time whether what is being stated represents first-hand experience or reiteration of received 'collective memory'. William Gray for example, has no recollection of this as a normal feature of their visits:

> I was talking to my brother, we never remembered anyone throwing anything. It would have been unusual for somebody to do that. But certainly if they didn't like something they'd shout something.[30]

However Sam Mitchell, who grew up close by and went to the Panopticon throughout his boyhood, states that the audience 'got fruit out the fruit market' and from 'the fruit barrow at the foot of Albion street, and brought it in', and moreover that the fallout from missiles was such that the band had to be protected ('they put the cover there, so that it didn't get hit … a sort of plastic thing').[31] This concurs with suggestions that barrows outside the theatre sold fruit specifically for this purpose, something which Georgina Claxton seems to corroborate:

> the other side of [i.e. of the street from] the Panopticon there were women, they called them the shawlie women, with fruit barrows. Now there's about six of them altogether from after Glassford Street […] Now those women, you could get a bag of fruit you know, six apples, six oranges six bananas, I can hear them still, and the fruit was just ready to go. But I'm quite sure that on a Saturday night, when they were wanting rid of the lot, you could get a bag of fruit for a penny or tuppence. Now this was the great thing:

what I can remember, or what has come back to me … people didn't go to the Panopticon to see the acts, they went to throw the fruit. This is what I think, I think this is right, because I think I have heard that on a Saturday night, they threw the fruit at them.[32]

Interestingly, the interviewee here, who lived locally and knew the area well, is confident of the facts regarding the fruit barrows (she points out later that she knew one of the women) but is at pains to emphasise where she is venturing into conjecture, that this is what she has heard.

Having formed a physical impression of the building, we will turn to explore the first of the three themes, the role of locality in its functioning.

One of the themes that emerges most clearly from these interviews about the Panopticon is the acute sense of locality, both in the mapping of the immediate area in interviewees' memories, and as a factor dictating their patterns of attendance and behaviour. No doubt the sense of this is intensified by the fact of the subjects being children, but beyond this the same sense of identity and local awareness seems to have permeated beyond to inflect and influence adult behaviour and perceptions. Certainly a factor in this was familiarity, and a sense of local ownership, reflected in recourse to the hall's local nickname. As Dan Kelly put it, 'Someone says to me "Do you know the Panopticon?" I said, "you mean the 'pots and pans?'"'[33]

A related feature of the interviews is that memories of visits are inseparable from the description and circumstances of getting there. For some interviewees, the locality of the venue was not incidental, but a precondition of their attendance. Eleanor Campbell, who lived nearby in Steel Street, off the Saltmarket, a block to the east of the Panopticon, thinks she was aged seven or eight when she first visited the hall with friends in the 1930s.

I was allowed to come here, where I wouldn't have been allowed to go into town to go to picture houses, and as far as I know it was all children that were there. And when we were here the last time my daughter said to me, 'It's not very big', and I said but when you're a kid you sit in the front row don't you, you don't worry about what's behind you.

For Eleanor as a young girl, the Panopticon represented a boundary, one that would become relaxed as she got older and was allowed to go further afield, first to cinemas further along Argyle Street, and then to smarter city centre venues like the Regal and Regent (even if her memory of the audience being predominantly comprised of children jars with other accounts).

At the other geographic extreme, and from the other direction, from west, as opposed to east, of Glasgow Cross, other visitors came from more distant parts of the city. George Baillie, who lived in Guest Street in Anderston, went to the Panopticon regularly from the aged of nine:

> I always managed once a week, and sometimes it was twice. We hadn't a lot of money in these days you know, so we had to depend on our parents giving us the price of the cinema, and I can't remember the price to get in, you know the admission price. […]
>
> I stayed in Anderston. So I walked from Anderston down here. In those days there was no problem walking. I mean, you weren't attacked or anything like that. Children were quite safe walking along the street then.[34]

While George was a regular at the Panopticon, his wife Agnes, who lived just streets away from him and was some years younger, only went once.

AB: You see, my people wouldn't let me come this length. We couldn't even go to what we called the Hielan' man's umbrella, that's at central … bridge, you know. We weren't allowed to go there. I think it was more protection of young people, you know.

GB: Protection of young girls.

AB: Girls, you know, protection of young girls …

GB: Boys could.

AB: So I don't know how I got here once, but I remember getting here once, you know, coming in and sitting down and watching a film. We could get to the Gaiety, that was in Anderston, or to the Kelvin, but if you went to the Kelvin you were a toff, it was a bit better than the Gaiety, higher than the Gaiety, but those were the only places we were allowed to go to, you know. But not out here.[35]

Margaret Logan similarly remembers making her way to the Panopticon from Anderston in 1932 or 1933 at a friend's instigation:

> I went to Washington Street school and it was my friend Kathy Watson, she stayed in Argyle Street, just round from Washington Street school…. And it was her that invited me round here, I don't remember paying, I think she must have had free tickets. And I think it must have been an afternoon, because I remember I came in and there were these wooden platforms, and there weren't an awful lot of people in. And up on stage I remember the chorus girls, because when we come home we were up the stairs and we were dancing [laughs] what we'd seen here, you know. But I don't remember paying, I think she must have had a free ticket or something,

because she stayed in Argyle Street and it was her that brought me here, I
didn't know.

About the place?

… about the place, you know, because I stayed in Bishops Street,
Anderston Cross, and we didn't come. I was only eight or nine, and we
didn't come away along here, you know.[36]

While George suggests that the Panopticon audience was not exclu-
sively local but 'came from all over', Agnes and Margaret Logan's rec-
ollections of attending local cinemas chimes with experience of other
children, and particularly girls. While walking across the city was com-
monplace—George mentions that his family regularly strolled three-
quarters of the way along Argyle Street as an outing—the point being
made is that there were perfectly good cinemas locally situated within a
couple of hundred yards. These were familiar and were frequented by sev-
eral generations of the family. This pattern of habitual and highly localised
attendance was repeated in the experience of most interviewees. Just as
George and Agnes' families usually went to the Gaiety just streets away on
Argyle Street, Anderston, another former music hall converted to cinema
usage, so Georgina Claxton, who stayed with her father at Bellgrove off
the Gallowgate, only a five minute bus ride from the Panopticon, was
nevertheless largely precluded from visiting it due to the closer presence
of Scott's pictures, and then, from 1931, the opening of the new Orient
cinema two streets away.

If Trongate was felt to be a long way from Anderston, it was even fur-
ther from outlying Maryhill, located to the north-west of the city centre,
where Bobby Reid went to the New Star and the Roxy cinemas, while the
family got their weekly experience of variety at the Empress at St George's
Cross, their local variety hall.

But the paradox to this macro locality, in which areas such as Anderston
functioned as villages within the city centre, with their own neighbour-
hood cinemas and places of resort for children, was that the broader
cityscape was also remembered. So just as children from different areas
found their way to the Panopticon, as a natural extension of the curiosity
and no doubt a rite of passage, so perceptions of locality also extended
to and were similarly rooted in the wider landscape of the city centre, a
busy, constantly shifting scene which was nevertheless quickly populated
by what soon became familiar landmarks and personalities.

Exploration of the wider scene beyond the Panopticon and its place in
young imaginations, leads onto the second theme, children's experience

of the world of the time. That is to say, not children's *role* in society, but rather children's experience of it.

The Audience

One of the key aspects of the interviews has been discussion of the Panopticon audience and its composition. While Eleanor Campbell suggested that she was allowed to attend the Panopticon because it was close to her home, and that the audience was largely comprised of children, this assessment of the audience is not one shared by the majority of interviewees. Most interviewees' visits occurred during daytime performances, where the bill of fare seems to have been films interspersed by a variety entertainment, notwithstanding the amateur nights, which were better attended evening events where the format seems to have varied. As in the case of Victor Walas, who reported the audience in the darkened auditorium being very noisy, with people shouting out, other accounts suggest that a large proportion were men from nearby model lodging houses.[37] Annie Daniels remembers the audience:

> It was mostly young people from round about the area, you know, and a lot of the modellers from the model there … Just ordinary men, working-class men, some not working, some very elderly, but all very down and out people, you know? And they would be wouldn't they, living in … that was their home. But they had nowhere to go, they would come in to spend an evening here.[38]

Although Josephine Parkin pointed out the existence of woman's hostels, Annie Daniels is definite in her mind that the modeller presence in the hall was predominantly male ('No, very few women') and knew the locations of the houses:

> possibly they lived along just at the High Street there, at the Gallowgate, they had a big model house along there. Then you had the Great Eastern one, which was up in Duke Street.[39]

Sam Mitchell remembers the modellers as a constant presence in the stalls:

> SM: They had a flask of soup and sandwiches, all well behaved.
> Int: And they used to give you a sandwich sometimes?
> SM: If you were sitting they just chapped you, it was usually here [indicates shoulder] and give you a drink of soup or tea.[40]

The only people who were refused admission were the meths drinkers, as the smell permeated wherever they went:

> They never got in … they didn't let them in downstairs … if they went into the toilet or anywhere, you'd to get corrugated paper or cardboard and set it on fire, that's the only thing that took the smell away.[41]

Given our intense modern anxiety about issues of child safety, the thought that large numbers of small children were allowed unsupervised into a darkened auditorium largely populated by down and out men seems unthinkable nowadays. But perhaps that is to project twenty-first century sensibilities about abuse onto a society in which older generations and extended families still played a much more prominent role. Josephine Parkin, who went to the Panopticon as an eight- or nine-year-old with her older brother, is equivocal about the presence of the modellers, but suggests that girls had to watch out for themselves. The inference of the wider conversation with Josephine was that this was not regarded as an issue at the time, simply something that street-wise girls, with their natural savvy, soon learned to look out for. Other interviewees' opinions about the modellers and the other men who may well have used the Panopticon as a refuge of sorts are more divided, with some informed by what seem retrospective adult attitudes. Georgina Claxton, who only went to the Panopticon once to see a classmate sing, clearly felt uncomfortable about both the place and the silent film she saw there, *Sweeney Todd*. Although her memories are vague, she picked up a firm idea of who went there, and the rather restless tone of her memories reflect her sense of unease.

> I think it sort of picked up men going in out the road, or they had had a drink or … I mean it hadn't the top audience, will I put it that way? I don't remember as I say, I was only ever there once and I just wouldn't go back to it, but nothing happened then or anything like that that made me like that, I think it was the film that I'd never ever seen Sweeney Todd or anyhow, but I think it was an audience of half drunk men going in to pass the afternoon, you know…. Not … not somewhere a family would say, 'Oh lets go to the pictures tonight'.[42]

Annie Daniels, on the other hand, is careful to characterise the modellers as 'down on their luck' but respectable:

> Of course, they always dressed with a collar and a tie and a tie pin. When they were in the models they had a chance to have a bath and dress up, have

a meal and then go back for somewhere to sleep. And they came out very respectable, they always were clean, and they always wore a cap, a collar and tie and a tie pin. That's the way they were. They weren't what you would call dowdy, sort of dirty … they were just respectable people, you know, that made the most of their positions.[43]

If the auditorium itself seems a wild place, to the extent that seventeen-year-old Victor Walas, coming upon it afresh, found the shouting out at the screen and the stage intimidating, those present as children found it unexceptional (Josephine Parkin thought it 'lively' or 'alive').

Trongate and Argyle Street

If the child's perspective on the audience in the hall is a mixture of pragmatism and wonder, the other abiding image of the interviews is the view they open up of the world beyond, the world of Trongate and Argyle Street. For those who came from further afield it represented a new, teeming prospect, while for those who lived nearby, in the immediate vicinities of the Saltmarket, Gallowgate, or the Gorbals, it offered a familiar and constantly evolving landscape of personalities, diversions and street theatre, many aspects of which feature large in the imagination of children of the time.

In the first instance, the Panopticon was only one of a range of competing entertainments. Annie Daniels remembered 'There were lots of amusements all around Argyle Street and you'd go in there and it was all these penny machines and that sort of thing.'[44] The then-seventeen Victor Walas remembered an arcade near his work in Jamaica Street called 'Funland', which may have been one of the places William Gray describes in an account dominated by schoolboy fascination with the Grand Guignol effects of grisly automata and the lure of a machine delivering electric shocks:

Now down here, round this area and further down towards Jamaica Street, there was various of these … they were full of all the wee gadgets, you put a penny in and you made people—automatons—[go] walking about, somebody getting beheaded or it turned out somebody was being hung or something, and it went through all the paraphernalia of how you got hung. And it served them right, sort of thing [laughs] … and another thing, the electrodes, sort of thing, you held onto, you put a penny in, and you could rotate this thing and put it up to whatever, you know … by the time you got your moneys worth you're [shaking arms]. You're boasting how far I could get up to a hundred. As I say, the others were all sorts of things …

somebody's death enacted through these wee models, you know. That was quite a thing …[45]

Also by Jamaica Street, in Oswald Street, was Wilson's Zoo, which remained open until the 1960s. Remembered by almost everyone interviewed, at one point it moved across the river into a Georgian building by the chain bridge (where William Gray recalled it being 'Painted vivid red, so you knew where it was …'). Situated 'just at the corner of Oswald Street and Argyle Street', Dan Kelly remembered it:

> You had a lion, you had a llama, you had snakes, you had scorpions and stuff like that, you know. But the lion had nae teeth. [laughs]… Oh, It was mangy looking, it never moved, it just sat in the one place all the time, and people just used to pass it by. But it was good. It didn't cost you anything to get in, it was free.[46]

Joe Lindsay was equally dismissive of the lion:

> They had a lion … I mean folk used to go in and sit beside it, the thing was that old, you know, I don't think the thing had any teeth.[47]

Other zoos were situated on the fourth floor of Wilson's Polytechnic (on the site of the former Anderson's Polytechnic in Argyle Street, that now houses the department store Debenhams) and, moving back eastwards, at various times in the Panopticon itself, and at Pickard's related venture, Pickard's Waxworks on the corner of Trongate and King Street. At one of the Pickard menageries Annie Daniels, taken to see the monkeys and handed a dish by the keeper, starting eating, unaware that it contained the monkey's food ('he said "hold it", and I thought he said "eat it"!').[48]

Beyond cinemas and entertainments, Argyle Street and Trongate were the focus of considerable activity as a major shopping thoroughfare, a window onto a world of popular fashion and consumption which could be enjoyed vicariously or on the level of spectacle by those without the money to necessarily patronise some of the shops directly.

> A way of entertaining was going out at night-time when the shops and stores were all closed, and you just window-shopped from one end of Glasgow Cross to away as far as Anderston, and you would go up Buchanan Street, Sauchiehall Street, where you had the beautiful Copelands, Pettigrews, Daleys, a way of life that's all gone now. The streets were packed, you never

see people out in the street now, everybody's got cars or they take taxis, but in those days everybody … the streets of Glasgow were packed with people being out, that was their entertainment actually, window shopping. I mean that is a fact … and it was wonderful, wonderful, it was terrific.[49]

Josephine Parkin's recollection, a classic past-present memory text in Kuhn's reading, shifting as it does between a (golden) remembered past and unflattering comparison with present day mores, is one of several interviews to stress a theme which had particular resonance for women interviewees: the elegance of shopwindow displays. This sense of display, clearly rooted in memories of childhood wonderment, combined with the sheer level of activity in the streets lent Argyle Street a theatrical dimension in its own right that we now find hard to appreciate, part of what Judith Walkowitz has described as 'a culture of visual pleasure featuring women as spectacle and increasingly as active spectators'.[50] Certainly the cumulative effects are indicated by Georgina Claxton's recollections of packed streets:

Oh, a Saturday night you couldn't walk! I mean, say the early thirties right up to the war years almost, the Trongate, you couldn't walk, you were walking on people. All the shops were lit up, the Panopticon was lit up, I mean everywhere. And that place you were talking about in Watson Street, the Queens, everywhere like that, was all lit up, everywhere till nine o'clock, it was all lit up, all the shops were lit up.[51]

For other interviewees, particularly boys, Argyle Street's appeal lay particularly in the vibrancy of the street culture. William Gray's more masculine take on the area's attractions, which also makes past/present reference to levels of violence, nevertheless acknowledges the presence of a sense of danger:

You came down, I did anyway, came down to this area, because along Argyle Street was quite a thing on a Saturday night. Not so much drunks as you get now, you know, aggressive drunks and so on. There'd be a lot of aggression. But at the street corners, between certain streets, people would be there, and there'd be crowds as you were walking along, so you'd join this crowd, and listen to this and that. An awful lot of them were into religion, the bible, and they'd argue about the bible, stock questions like 'Where did Cain get his wife?' [laughs] He must have married his sister, or a monkey or something. That was the sort of thing they argued about, vehemently sometimes.[52]

As well as religious debaters, perched on step ladders, book sellers were also a particular presence.

> A big thing of that time was books, barrows with all sorts of books at nearly every intersection as you went up … you know, uptown [going up] from Argyle Street going up to Sauchiehall Street. At nearly every street there'd be a chappie with a barrow full of books. And you took your, all sort of time to get up the road, because you sat there and you picked up a book and sat on the edge of the barrow and read half of it before you went on … you wouldn't get up there before you'd stop at another street and you'd be away into another book …[53]

Street entertainers of various kinds also featured high in childhood impressions of the fabric of street life. Agnes Baillie remembered:

> The wee man that came round like Charlie Chaplin, and you'd to sit on the pavement, you know, and he played thingmy and the kids had to sing songs with him, you know. The likes of them were good.[54]

Her husband George remembered a performer he saw regularly around the Charing Cross and Argyle Street areas:

> There was an old Indian man, he wore sort of coloured dress, you know, the big hat? He had an old pram, with a—what was on it again? A gramophone, and he had a board! … he played the gramophone, put the board down, and he used to tap dance on the board. Of course it was just a matter of collecting the, he had a hat down for collecting money.[55]

William Gray remembers entertainers, 'lots of them', on Argyle Street:

> They weren't allowed, you know, so the police chased them. And they would be up side streets, and there would be some running along the pavements in the main streets, but they'd soon get chased off. But into the side streets, and maybe four of five coming round. Some would be step-dancing and some would be doing all sorts of things, and playing whatever instrument. And again they got chased [you know, the police], but they were less likely when they were round there.[56]

And beyond the entertainers, there were eccentrics. Anne Docherty, assisted by the interjection of her husband Willie, remembered her mother pointing out the Clincher, a famous Glasgow street figure:

> AD: I don't remember anything about him but that this was the Clincher, and he had white fizzy hair, and he had a board on his back, over his shoulder, back and front. I can't remember what it said …
> WD: I can remember exactly what it said. It must have been Christmas time, and he had a bit of mistletoe pinned to the back of his trousers, and a notice saying 'you can kiss me under the misteltoe'.[57]

As well as the Clincher, Georgina Claxton particularly remembered an eccentric lady with a birdcage containing a bird who would tell fortunes by picking out a tiny twist of paper with its beak.[58]

The lure of Argyle Street and its attractions was a challenge which most children accepted as a rite of passage, but while Anderston was close enough to walk from, more distant areas required public transport. Although Willie Docherty only went to the Panopticon a couple of times, in the mid 1930s, he frequently came up to town with his friends:

> At that time we were a crowd of young men of fourteen or fifteen. We used to take the circle train into town on a Saturday night, you know, for a night out.[59]

Although the night out usually consisted of 'walking along Argyle Street [laughter] from the station, walking along to the Panopticon area', a large part of the appeal was evidently the train journey on the Cathcart circle line:

> We used to spend a lot of time on the train on a Saturday night, on the circle trains, going round and round.[60]

Bobby Reid had similarly come from Maryhill on much the same mission, with three or four friends as a ten-year-old around 1922:

> I think it cost us a ha'penny on the tram at that time, you know. And we came in here, I think we paid a penny to get in, which was a lot of money, because we only had two pence to start with, Saturday pennies, you know.[61]

Although for William Docherty and his friends the Panopticon was a run-down old place ('it was old and it was cheap'), just one of several cinemas on Argyle Street, for Bobby Reid it was iconic, a landmark, and a visit to it was symbolic of a new adult independence:

We just knew it as the Panopticon, it was always known as the Panopticon. I mean it was somewhere you knew, you know, like Boots Corner and that, we knew places in the centre of the town, you know. We called this going into the town, although we were actually living in the same town, but we called this going into the town if you came in towards the centre, so I probably was round about here maybe say with my father and that, and we were always knowing this place was the Panopticon, you know, so to go to the Panopticon was an experience, and us were grown up at ten year old, we were grown up, you know, and away happily in.[62]

In the event Reid's memory is probably not of the Panopticon itself, but of the adjacent Pickard's waxworks, a few doors along on the corner of King Street, where their visit resulted in a scaring confrontation with what they assumed to be Zulu warriors:

Oh, that was an adventure. I mean Maryhill was a distance away for tiny legs, and you didn't always have money for the tram, you know how it was the tram-car in these days you know…. Oh that was an adventure, especially as I say the second time we had to walk home again, because it was a long, long long trek to get home. But we were great, you know, we told everybody we had been in here and been charged by the Zulus and all the rest of it, you know.[63]

While the activity and excitement of Argyle Street offered a range of powerful images, the interviews show that other more mundane features of everyday life also featured vividly in young imaginations.

Horses were clearly a familiar and much loved aspect of city life for city children, a feature which serves to emphasise the changes in urban life since and distance the world of ninety years ago from our own. Trace horses, extra horses stationed on hand to help horses pulling wagons up inclines of some city centre streets, noticeably West Nile Street, feature in several interviews. Sam Mitchell's brother 'took up with trace horse boys', while in a particular memory text, Dan Kelly links his association with them to the specific moment in the late 1930s when he realised the Panopticon had closed:

I was doing my trace boy, up West Nile Street to the Buchanan Street goods yard. I was coming along this way with a trace horse to pick up a lad that had a big container, and I was looking, and I couldn't see the Panopticon, it was something had been built on the front of it. I thought they must have changed it and built something on front of it.[64]

Joe Lindsay's father was a carter, who worked with horses moving theatrical scenery, and Betty Thomson's father also worked with horses professionally. Her description of her love of horses, and the urban context of the stabling arrangements, serves to heighten the underlying sense of the town and country divide. She explains of her father:

> He was a horse and cart grocery delivery man, and in the summer holidays, when it came to school holidays, very often I would get taken on with him, and I thought that was wonderful, the clip-clop clip-clop of a horse, and we went away to Rutherglen and High Burnside and places like that, and I felt that was country in comparison to where we lived. That was great. I used to go with him, just down the road here off Saltmarket, to the warehouse where he loaded up the lorry, and then he went home for his breakfast, then set off for the different places. And then when he finished he took us to the stables, and there was a ramp for the horse to go up, and we got sitting on its back, right up, as it got put into its sleeping place. I still love horses.[65]

(The corollary of this idyll was the cruelty inflicted by frozen cobbles: 'it used to be terrible in the winter, when it was icy the horses fell, it was a terrible job to get them back on their feet').[66]

Another day to day feature of street life, particularly for those who lived close by the Panopticon, was the presence of a number of religious groups in the vicinity. Eleanor Campbell's close in Steel Street, off the Saltmarket, was directly opposite the Tent Hall, used by Evangelists under their charismatic leader, Jock Troup:

> They had a wee outdoor meeting just beside the steeple at Glasgow Cross, then they marched down the Saltmarket singing, and you know people hung out of windows in those days and he waved up to them, he was quite flamboyant.[67]

Coming up from the Gallowgate with her father, Georgina Claxton recalled a plethora of competing religious groups out to confront sinners:

> From Glasgow Cross practically every street had … well they had the tent hall, … the salvation army, the tollbooth hall, every street had some sort of religious group telling you you were bound for hell if you didn't change your wicked ways, so I don't know whether I thought of my wicked ways, because I was fascinated standing watching those people, more so than watching Sweeney Todd and Mary.[68]

However Georgina's enduring memory is of righteous attempts at pastoral outreach being exploited to farcical effect.

> On a Saturday night, after they had done all their telling you were going to hell if you didn't [ask for] redemption and so on, they had a light, and somebody played a small—what's a small accordian?
>
> A concertina?
>
> Well, they all walked along going down to the Tent Hall. Now all the drunk men along that road all managed to latch onto them, and they were all going too, they were all singing, change your wicked ways and so on, but always, always there was a crowd of drunk men latched onto them, and they went into the tent hall. And I imagine, on a Sunday morning they went there for their free meal, there was a free meal.[69]

While religion was widely featured in the context of religious groups, often linked with entertainment or diversion, the interviews contained little reference to sectarian tensions. This may have been because the lines drawn were so evident as not to need mentioning. While Dan Kelly's memory mapping of the city centre of his youth, the most detailed and diverse of those encountered, also extended to gang culture, his own position was an interesting one; at a time when most street gangs had religious affiliations, he possessed an Irish name but was a protestant, a position which, combined with his knowledge of the various local figures involved, he exploited to his advantage.

> Women could walk the streets, lassies could go to the dancing, and come out of the dancing at one o'clock and walk hame with nae bother. Naebody would bother them. I mean I used to walk up the Parliamentary Road. Taylor Street was the protestant part. The Billy Boys were standing there. Get to Castle Street and it was the Cheeky Forty, they came from the Garngad, they were all Catholic, and I knew the whole lot of them. And as I passed they would say 'how's it going Dan?' 'Alright, nae bother', and that was it. Go up to the top of Castle Street and Hatchet McClatchie and that lot used to say 'How's it going Dan?' 'No bad'. 'You going up the Garngad?' 'Aye, I'm going up to ma auntie's'.[70]

Having established the world onto which the Panopticon gave, the social hinterland of its constituency and our interviewees, my third theme is the role of the Panopticon and the entertainment it offered in the popular imagination of this audience.

In her work on reception with social audiences of the 1930s, Annette Kuhn has made the case for the dream palaces of the time and the entertainment they purveyed as capturing the popular imagination of the audiences which consumed the products of the Hollywood dream factory of the early 1930s. In Kuhn's example, Hollywood film texts such as the musicals of Astaire and Rogers, absorbed over the ninety or so minutes of the screening, then permeated and inspired wider popular culture through hair and dress fashions, and the culture of ballroom dancing and its codes of behaviour.[71] Kuhn's sense of the value of this culture is vested in the imaginative power of its romantic fantasy, a power rooted in escapism. Points of comparison with the music hall entertainment offered by the Panopticon seem difficult on several counts. In the first place, while the text of music hall is readable, the form itself, unlike that of the silver screen, was not of the moment, but was rather, in the period under discussion, the mid-1920s to late 1930s, a form of performance in decline, one belonging to an earlier period of popular culture, and which was, in this case, being offered in a debased form: as a truncated variety show, consisting of live acts offered in a single burst between films screenings. (Comparisons with the wider state of music hall at other Glasgow venues would almost certainly show a more robustly healthy form.)

Moreover, much of the live entertainment at the Panopticon in this period, in which the hall was demonstrably run down and third rate, was offered by amateurs, whose appeal lay largely in the anticipated likelihood of their failure. However, there is a comparison to be made on the basis of the differences in cultural perspective and function represented by the two forms, and by the difference in the two periods they represent; in other words, in highlighting two different approaches to popular culture.

So what was the imaginative influence of music hall entertainment at the Panopticon? Were children as imaginatively gripped or influenced by aspects of music hall as audiences were by film? In fact, most interviewees only have vague memories of the acts they saw at the Panopticon, due firstly to their being children, and secondly because the acts tend only to be remembered in generic terms (hence George Baillie, who went twice a week, recalling 'the show involved singers, jugglers, things like that, you know. I can' t remember too much about it'[72]). This is a result of the basic nature of the fare the hall provided, and the fact that the performers were not stars (most interviewees remember the headline acts they saw at the Metropole, which attracted leading star performers). As an example of the imaginative influence of film, Eleanor Campbell was not particularly interested in feature films she saw around the time she attended the Panopticon

as an eight or nine years old, but has vivid recollections of film serials she saw there:

> Well the ones I remember best were the deep-sea divers, you know, with the big suits that they wore in those days. And it was either an octopus was choking their air pipe or something, you know, or it was a shark going to attack them, and … I suppose it was a … sunken galleon or something that they were going down to. And I vaguely remember cowboy things, but it's the deep-sea divers that I do remember …[73]

This vivid collage of memory stimulates through a range of exotic narrative possibilities. Music hall, by contrast, offered merely the possibility of individual virtuosity, if you were lucky, or catchy, diverting songs. However, although nothing like as imaginatively rich, some accounts of live performers at the Panopticon do elicit positive memories or enthusiasm. Margaret Logan, who came with her friend from Anderston, retained a strong impression of the chorus girls they saw dancing:

> I just remember, I think there were about five girls, kicking their … [gestures] (laughs). That's about all I remember, you know. But that particular mix must have stuck in my mind. Because I remember, we were only wee girls, and as we went hame we were practising it [laughter].[74]

William Gray saw a comic do a drunk act, which evidently made enough of an impression, as he remembers the song. He says of the performer:

> He seemed to come here quite often, because I saw him quite often, he did a drunk act and staggered all around the stage, and then he sang, and the words were:
> > Oh MacCluskey–uskey–uskey
> > Where do you get all the whuskey?
> > Oh MacCluskey, Man, I wish I was you![75]

Joe Lindsey saw midgets and a man with elastic skin, whose flesh came up in welts when people wrote on it with a match. In contrast, Josephine Parkin remembered a performer whose unknown song left a lasting impression, and sparked a train of reminiscence about Glasgow music hall:

> he was just a working man, you know, with well worn clothes and his bunnet and all that business, and the pianist playing it and it was like, eh, an old song, like, I'd be telling a lie if I could say exactly what it was, but it was

like the music hall things like 'why did you make me care', and all this busi-
ness. Because in those days the Queens and the Metropole were filled with
the true Glaswegian entertainer, because my mother was a great one for the
theatre, and I went every Friday night with her to the Queens, and we went
round the backside that was an alleyway in Watson Street, and we went up to
the gods again, the wooden seats and that. And there were people like Frank
and Doris Droy. All these folk.[76]

If Josephine Parkin is here getting closer to articulating a social rationale
to the entertainment, as a statement of working-class culture, music hall
could also offer what on some level was a transcendent experience. Annie
Daniels' memory of the Houston sisters, remembered not from the stage
of the Panopticon, although they would probably have appeared there,
but from that of the Queen's Theatre very much falls into this category:

The first two stars that I saw at […] it was the Houston sisters. Billie and
Renee Houston. And I remember that little cinema in Watson Street. And
we went and they were beautiful. To me as a child, I was only about ten, to
look down on them they were all beautifully dressed. Billie was dressed in
shorts, little silk super shorts, and she had Eton cropped hair and she looked
lovely. Renee was dressed as the girl, and curls all, and beautifully dressed.
And they used to do a song and dance act. But that was the first time, was
that little cinema over in Watson Street.[77]

The Houston sisters (Fig. 6.2) were iconic figures for Annie Daniels, who
tracked their subsequent careers as they went on to national success, and
for whom Renee retained her glamorous image, right up to her final sight-
ing of her on stage at the New Metropole at St George's Cross years later;
'she came in, she was beautiful, she was elderly, but she was dressed and
she was still very attractive'.[78]

But the Houstons were exceptions, genuinely luminous performers
who serve only to point up the paucity of what was usually on offer at most
variety halls, and certainly at the Panopticon, in terms of anything resem-
bling a transcendent experience. While fantasy-based films could transport
the viewer, music hall was steeped in—indeed was a product of—the reali-
ties of life. As such it was the antithesis of 'dream factory' escapism, offer-
ing rather the last phase of an older more basic entertainment.

Setting aside rare highlights such as the chorus girls' inspiration of
Margaret Logan and her friend, and some fondly remembered songs, there
seems, from a modern perspective, precious little that was joyous or life

Fig. 6.2 Renee (*left*) and Billie, the Houston Sisters (Author's collection)

enhancing about the performances at the Panopticon: the onus was rather on the grotesque and what seems dysfunctional, on midgets, 'freaks' and child acts with Ricketts. But if the image is essentially of a rather bleak entertainment, where the professionals weren't very good and amateur performers were generally anticipated as the targets of vilification, this is not surprising. This was a very basic entertainment, conceived to be just good enough to do what it needed to meet its market. Just as working people's

lives were hard, the quality and circumstances of this entertainment reflected the same economic realities. Perhaps to put this into better perspective we should explore some economic aspects of working people's lives.

Dan Kelly, whose father lost the ability to work through illness and was eventually forced to go on the parish at the end of his life, described the economics of work as he encountered it as a young man in his mid-teens:

> I worked seven days a week myself when I got older. But prior to that I worked five days a week. You worked from eight o'clock to five o'clock and got five shillings a week for pulling a big barrow. And if you worked two nights late you got another shilling. Then you got fourpence off for your insurance. So when you went back to your mum at night, on a Friday, to give her your wages, you got sixpence off and she got the rest. But the sixpence took you to the pictures, and it gave you a packet of woodbine. That was alright. You got five Woodbine for tuppence.[79]

Such financial pressures led to a sharp concentration on essentials. Josephine Parkin recalls the most important things in life as being 'good food and a clean bed, and heat in the house', adding her mother's dictum that 'heat and food were the two main things in your life'.[80] With regard to cheap and plentiful food, Dan Kelly used to get up at five on Saturday mornings with his father to go to Ladywell, by the Necropolis:

> There used to be a piggery there, and they used to make bacon and stuff. And if you took a—what do you call it?—a pillowcase you could get it filled with ribs and pigs feet for sixpence. And then you went round the corner to the bakers just down the bottom, you could take another pillowcase, and you could get what they called end bread, … you'd maybe get three or four loaves, that done you right through the week, for two shillings, a shilling at the most. You were better fed then than you are now …[81]

Dan Kelly's memory map of the Glasgow of his boyhood contains constant reminders of the hardship of life, factors which for him are subsidiary to the sense that the feeling of community with which he grew up has been lost.

> You had Barracks Street, I can't remember the other street … and then you had Sydney Street. And further along you had the abattoir where they used to bring the cattle in. I used to go with a stick with my dad and chase the coos into the place to get killed [laughs]. But … the place is not the same, the people's not the same ... Where we are at the present moment, I mean,

you could lie at the back of the door dead and they wouldn't bother their shirt. But then, when I was wee if your mum didn't feel well somebody would chap the door and say 'Are you no feeling well?' 'No I don't feel good at all', and they would make a meal and they would hand it in. But now they don't seem to look after each other. I think it's all wrong.[82]

Given this dual context, of poverty and community, it is not surprising that interviewees' accounts of visiting the Panopticon are shot through with details of the material circumstances of life, which in some cases loom larger than memories of the entertainment itself. So Sam Mitchell and his friends raise their entrance money by breaking up orange boxes from the fruit-market for firewood, and take in sweeties and ginger with 'a penny bag of broken cakes' from Mackenzies the bakers a few doors along; the entertainment itself belongs to a world of child performers and largely anonymous acts, and the audience arm themselves with ammunition—rotten fruit, recycled by barrow sellers—with which to pelt bad amateur performers.

As encountered here, the Panopticon was like the pubs with formica-topped tables and overhead strip lighting that existed in industrial areas in the 1970s and early 1980s. When customers began to require a higher degree of comfort, they adapted or disappeared. The Panopticon as described in these interviews, although competing with cinemas, was in fact the antithesis of the Dream Factory product purveyed by Hollywood films. Predicated not on fantasy or escapism but on reality, it provided a commodified utilitarian, no-frills entertainment that was as basic as most other aspects of working people's lives, the equivalent of the much remembered twopenny packet of woodbine ('coffin nails') that got you five cigarettes and a match. The point at which we encounter the hall—in these interviews recalling the 1920s and 1930s—is not one of transition but rather the final phase of its decline. While music hall/variety would endure for another generation, by consolidating its shrinking influence with better performers in fully-fledged variety halls like the Metropole, with which the Panopticon had not been competing on equal terms for many years, its own race was run.

While the silver screen dealt in the romantic escapism of Astaire and Rodgers, the Panopticon in its debased phase, when it seems to have largely eschewed proper professional variety for the easier returns of midgets, 'freaks' and the amateurs, belonged to a meaner Victorian world; of the cruel humour of Dan Kelly's abattoir laughter and of the heated-up coin thrown down from upstairs windows to burn the hands of back court entertainers. Its consumers were under no illusions. If anything, children

got rather more out if it imaginatively than it was worth. But if cinema and the luxury values they projected represented an aspiration to something better, at least of the imagination, the Panopticon was essentially a theatre of poverty, the rather tired fag-end of a genre, music hall, which was by the interwar years, worn out and all but ready to cede its place. While the amateur nights perpetuated the place of the audience at the heart of the performing culture, they seem at this late stage to have been deployed to cynical effect, the appeal of the events being now largely based on ridicule of the amateur performers.

A nineteenth-century entertainment aimed at working people which, even operating at the very bottom of the commercial entertainment ladder, remained commercially viable until the late 1930s, was here captured in its final, debased phase. While our interviewees for this research connect their childhood memories with the vibrancy of the Glasgow music hall tradition, with performers such as Tommy Morgan, Dave Willis, Frank and Doris Droy and Sammy Murray, and venues like the Metropole, Queen's and Pavilion, where it would continue for another generation, in truth the Panopticon was something different and older, and, in the reversion of the straitened circumstances of its decline, more connected to the fairground and freak show lineage from which it had sprung ninety or so years before. While it undoubtedly embodied the working-class culture for which it catered, that culture was moving on.

Josephine Parkin, whose mother took her to variety at the Queen's Theatre every week, tacitly embraces these contradictions when summing up what she remembered about the Panopticon:

> Well, I think it was very alive. It was very poor, I can remember that, very very much; dark and, you know … certainly not really a place of enjoyment as regards to the place, but probably what it offered to the people who really were very poor then.[83]

Notes

1. Interview with Dan Kelly, 13.3.05. All interviews for this research were undertaken by the author, and are reproduced here by permission of University of Glasgow Library, Department of Special Collections.
2. James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory: New Perspectives on the Past* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 2. The authors term this the 'textual model' of memory.

3. Dwight Conquerblood, quoting Stephen Tyler, has characterised this as 'the return of the speaking, communicating bodies, a "return to the commonsense, plurivocal world of the speaking subject"'. Dwight Conquergood, 'Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics', in *Communication Monographs*, 58 (June 1991), 179–93, here 181–83; quoting Stephen Tyler, *The Unspeakable*: *Discourse, Dialogue and Rhetoric in the Postmodern World* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 171.

4. Conquergood, 'Rethinking Ethnography', 183.

5. Fiona Fumerton, 'Introduction: A New New Historicism', in *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday*, ed. Fumerton and Simon Hunt (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 1–17, here 5.

6. S.C. Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture in Southwark c.1880–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 19.

7. Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*: *New Perspectives on the Past*, 7.

8. Annette Kuhn, *An Everyday Magic*: *Cinema and Cultural Memory* (NY & London: I.B. Tauris, 2002).

9. Discussed in Kuhn, *An Everyday Magic*, 9–11, 177–81.

10. Interview with Victor Walas, 12.2.05.

11. Kuhn, *An Everyday Magic*, 17–31.

12. Interview with Elizabeth (Betty) Thomson 29.1.05.

13. Interview with Sam Mitchell 21.1.05.

14. Interview with William Gray, 26.9.03.

15. Interview with William Gray, 26.9.03.

16. Annette Kuhn, 'A Journey Through Memory',in *Memory and Methodology*, ed. Susannah Radstone (Oxford & New York: Berg, 2000), 179–96, here 190.

17. Interview with Christopher Lee, 1.7.05.

18. Interview with Georgina Claxton, 17.3.05.

19. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Disenchanted Night*: *The Industrialisation of Light in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 1988), 148.

20. Per Lindberg, quoted in Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance*: *The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 162.

21. Interview with Christopher Lee, 1.7.05.

22. Interview with Christopher Lee, 1.7.05.

23. Interview with Josephine Parkin, 26.9.03.

24. Interview with Sam Mitchell, 21.1.05.

25. Interview with Annie Daniels, 6.9.03.

26. Interview with Willie Docherty, 21.1.05.

27. Interview with Betty Thomson, 29.1.05.

28. Fentress and Wickham believe such claims about past events stem from social memory's function as an expression of collective experience. They suggest that 'the question of whether we regard these memories as histori-

cally true will often turn out to be less important than whether *they* [the subjects] regard their memories as true'. Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, 26.

29. Interview with Dan Kelly, 13.3.05.
30. Interview with William Gray, 26.9.03.
31. Interview with Sam Mitchell, 21.1.05.
32. Interview with Georgina Claxton, 17.3.05.
33. Interview with Dan Kelly, 13.3.05.
34. Interview with George & Agnes Baillie, 27.1.05.
35. Interview with George & Agnes Baillie, 27.1.05.
36. Interview with Margaret Logan, 2.2.05.
37. Stuart Laidlaw wrote in 1956, 'The terms "common lodging-house" and "model lodging-house" are used today as synonyms. The term "modeller" was coined for the lodger without any implication of quality', supporting several interviewees' insistence on the dignity of modellers as respectable working men. See Stuart Laidlaw, *Glasgow Common Lodging-Houses and the People Living in Them* (Health and Welfare Committee of the Corporation of Glasgow, 1956).
38. Interview with Annie Daniels, 6.9.03.
39. Interview with Annie Daniels, 6.9.03.
40. Interview with Sam Mitchell, 20.1.05.
41. Interview with Sam Mitchell, 20.1.05.
42. Interview with Georgina Claxton, 17.3.05.
43. Interview with Annie Daniels, 6.9.03.
44. Interview with Annie Daniels, 6.9.05.
45. Interview with William Gray, 26.9.03.
46. Interview with Dan Kelly, 26.9.03.
47. Interview with Joe Lindsay, 13.3.04.
48. Interview with Annie Daniels, 6.9.05.
49. Interview with Josephine Parkin, 26.9.03.
50. Judith R. Walkowitz, *Nights Out: Life in Cosmopolitan London* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 5.
51. Interview with Georgina Claxton, 17.3.05.
52. Interview with William Gray, 26.9.03.
53. Interview with William Gray, 26.9.03.
54. Interview with George & Agnes Baillie, 27.1.05.
55. Interview with George & Agnes Baillie, 27.1.05.
56. Interview with William Gray, 26.9.03.
57. Interview with William Docherty, 21.1.05.
58. Georgina Claxton, supplementary interview.
59. Interview with Willie Docherty, 21.1.05.
60. Interview with Willie Docherty, 21.1.05.

61. Interview with Bobby Reid, 14.3.05.
62. Interview with Bobby Reid, 14.3.05.
63. Interview with Bobby Reid, 14.3.05.
64. Interview with Dan Kelly, 26.9.03.
65. Interview with Betty Thomson, 29.1.05.
66. Interview with Betty Thomson, 29.1.05.
67. Interview with Eleanor Campbell, 27.1.2005. For Troup and the Tent Hall see George J. Mitchell, *Revival Man*: *The Jock Troup Story* (Tain: Christian Focus, 2002).
68. Interview with Georgina Claxton, 17.3.05.
69. Interview with Georgina Claxton, 17.3.05.
70. Interview with Dan Kelly, 26.9.03.
71. Kuhn, *An Everyday Magic*, 169–76.
72. Interview with George & Agnes Baillie, 27.1.05.
73. Interview with Eleanor Campbell, 27.1.05.
74. Interview with Margaret Logan, 2.2.05.
75. Interview with William Gray, 26.9.03.
76. Interview with Josephine Parkin, 26.9.03.
77. Interview with Annie Daniels, 6.9.03.
78. Interview with Annie Daniels, 6.9.03. For Houstons see *Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women*, ed. Elizabeth Ewan et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).
79. Interview with Dan Kelly, 13.3.04.
80. Interview with Josephine Parkin, 26.9.03.
81. Interview with Dan Kelly, 26.9.03.
82. Interview with Dan Kelly, 26.9.03.
83. Interview with Josephine Parkin, 26.9.03.

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