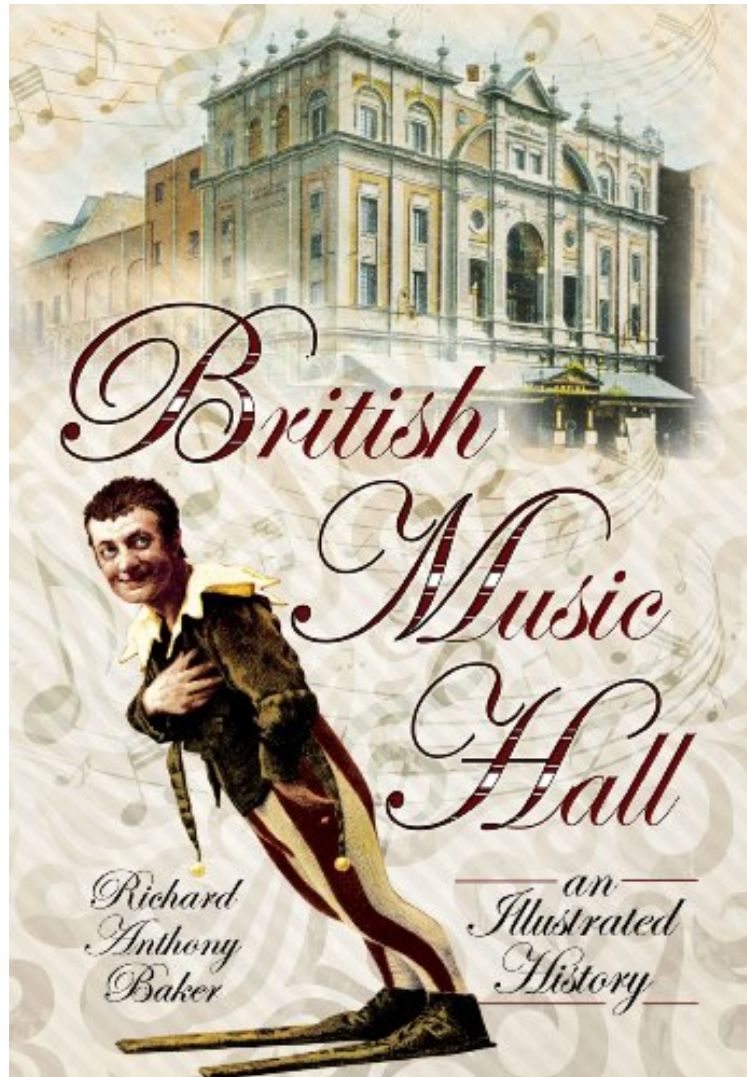


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British Music Hall: An Illustrated History

Richard Anthony Baker

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The music hall ...had no place for reticence; it was downright, it shouted, it made noise, it enjoyed itself and made the people enjoy themselves as well. W.J. MACQUEEN POPE Music Hall lies at the root of all modern popular entertainment. With stars such as Marie Lloyd, Harry Lauder and Dan Leno, it reached its glorious, brassy height between 1890 and the First World War. In the first book on this subject for many years, Richard Anthony Baker whisks us off on a colorful and nostalgic tour of the rise and fall of British music hall. At the beginning of the nineteenth century people sang traditional songs in taverns for entertainment. This was so popular that rooms started to be added to inns for shows to be staged, and, before long, songs were being specially composed and purpose-built theaters were springing up everywhere. Britain's working class had, for the first time, its own form of public entertainment and its own breed of stars. The color and vitality attracted serious writers and artists, as well as the future Edward VII, and music hall became simultaneously the haunt of the working classes and the avant-garde. Including stories of a clergyman who wrote music-hall sketches, a hall in Glasgow where luckless entertainers were pulled off stage by a long hooked pole, and Cockney dictionaries that helped Americans understand touring British performers, this book is a hugely engaging slice of social history, rich in humor, tragedy and bathos.

About the Author During 30 years at the BBC, Richard Anthony Baker wrote and presented music hall and variety programmes for Radios Two and Three. For Radio Five Live, he devised the world's first obituaries programme, Brief Lives, producing its first 300 editions. In 1990, he published a slim biography of Marie Lloyd and in 2011 *An Old Time Variety* followed. He contributes regularly to *The Stage* and the British Music Hall Society's magazine, *The Call Boy*.