

The Victorians

Learning Objective:

To find out about the Victorian music hall and to become familiar with some music hall songs.

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Do you know what
music hall is?

Do you know any
music hall songs?

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Taverns and saloons had provided musical and variety entertainment since medieval times. However, the Theatre Act of 1843 banned any such entertainment unless the venue was a theatre. This is how music hall in Britain was born. Halls or theatres had tables at one end where people could eat and drink and a platform at the other where singers and variety acts could perform.



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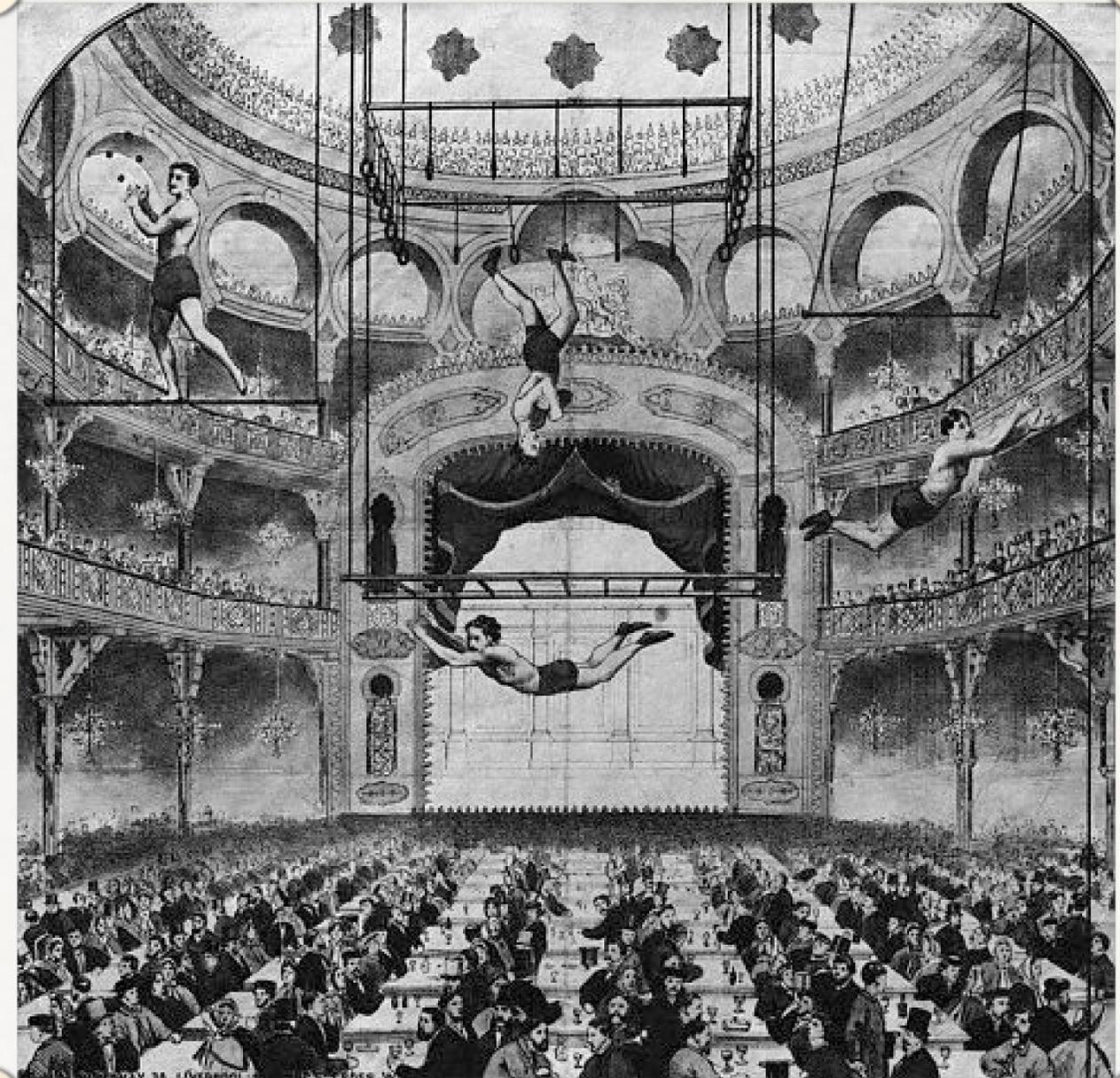


To begin with it was the working classes who went to music halls. People went to enjoy watch acts such as comedians, acrobats and dancers and to join in with the singing of popular music hall songs. More often than not, a visit to the music hall involved having a few drinks too! Theatres were different to music halls because they staged plays instead of variety acts. Going to the theatre tended to be a pastime of the middle and upper classes as it was more expensive than the music hall and music halls were louder and more raucous.

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As music hall became more popular and richer people started to enjoy the entertainment. By 1875 there were over 300 music halls in London alone. Large theatres that had once been the haunt of the upper classes were taken over as music halls for everyone to enjoy. They became a place where everyone could relax and enjoy themselves.



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Victorian music hall produced some songs that are still famous today. Songs became popular with the public and were then performed at other music halls. These popular songs became almost a part of the British identity.

Do you know any of these songs?

Daisy Bell

Down at the Old Bull
and Bush

Any Old Iron

Don't Dilly Dally on the
Way

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Let's look at the lyrics to these four songs; Daisy Bell, Any Old Iron, Down at the Old Bull and Bush and Don't Dilly Dally on the Way.



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Daisy Bell

There is a flower within my heart,
Daisy, Daisy,
Planted one day by a glancing dart,
Planted by Daisy Bell.
Whether she loves me or loves me not
Sometimes it's hard to tell,
Yet I am longing to share the lot
Of beautiful Daisy Bell.

Chorus:

*Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer, do,
I'm half crazy all for the love of you.
It won't be a stylish marriage -
I can't afford a carriage,
But you'd look sweet upon the seat
Of a bicycle built for two.*

We will go tandem as man and wife,
Daisy, Daisy,
Peddling away down the road of life,
I and my Daisy Bell.
When the nights dark, we can both despise
Policemen and lamps as well.
There are bright lights in the dazzling eyes
Of my beautiful Daisy Bell.
(Chorus)

I will stand by you in weal or woe
Daisy, Daisy,
You'll be the bell which I'll ring you know
Sweet little Daisy Bell
You'll take the lead in each trip we take
and if I don't do well
I will permit you to use the brake
My beautiful Daisy Bell.
(Chorus)

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Down at the Old Bull and Bush

Come, come, come and make eyes at me
down at the Old Bull and Bush,
Da, da, da, da, da,
Come, come, drink some port wine with me,
Down at the Old Bull and Bush,
Hear the little German band,
Da, da, da, da, da,
Just let me hold your hand dear,
Do, do come and have a drink or two
down at the Old Bull and Bush.

Talk about the shade of the sheltering palm
Praise the bamboo tree
with it's wide spreading charm,
There's a little nook
down by old Hampstead Town,
You know the place it has great renown.
Often with my sweetheart on a bright summer's day,
To the little pub my footsteps they will stray,
If he hesitates when he looks at the sign,
Promptly I whisper, "Now don't you decline."

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Any Old Iron

Just a week or two ago my poor old Uncle Bill,
Went and kicked the bucket then he left me in his will.
The other day I popped around to see poor Auntie Jane.
She said, "Your Uncle Bill has left to you a watch and chain."
I put it on right across my vest,
I thought I looked a dandy as it dangled on my chest,
Just to flash it off I started walking all about,
A lot of kiddies followed me and all began to shout,

*"Any old iron? Any old iron?
Any, any, any old iron?
You look neat. Talk about a treat!
You look dapper from your napper to your feet.
Dressed in style, brand-new tile,
And your father's old green tie on.
But I wouldn't give you tuppence for your old watch chain,
Old iron, old iron."*

I went to a City and thought I'd have a spree.
The Mayor of London, he was there, that's who I went to see.
He dashed up in a canter with a carriage and a pair,
I shouted "Holler boys" and threw my hat up in the air.
Just then the Mayor he began to smile,
Just to flash it off I shouted "Lumme what a dial!"

Started a-Lord Mayoring and I thought that I should die
When pointing to my watch and chain he hollered to me "Hi!"

Just to have a little bit of fun the other day,
Made up in my watch and chain I went and drew my pay.
Then got out with lots of other Colonels on the loose,
I got full right up to here in the fourp'ny stagger juice.
One of them said "We want a pot of ale
Run him to the rag shop and bung him on the scale."
I heard the fellow say "What's in this bundle that you've got?"
Then whisper to me kindly, "Do you want to lose the lot?"

Shan't forget when I got married to Selina Brown,
The way the people laughed at me, it made me feel a clown.
I began to wonder, when their dials began to crack,
If by mistake I'd got my Sunday trousers front to back.
I wore my chain on my darby kell,
The sun was shining on it and it made me look a swell.
The organ started playing and the bells began to ring,
My chain began to rattle so the choir began to sing.

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Don't Dilly Dally on the Way

We had to move away
'Cos the rent we couldn't pay.
The moving van came round just after dark.
There was me and my old man,
Shoving things inside the van,
Which we'd often done before, let me remark.
We packed all that could be packed
In the van, and that's a fact.
And we got inside all that we could get inside.
Then we packed all we could pack
On the tailboard at the back,
Till there wasn't any room for me to ride.

Chorus:

My old man said: "Follow the van,
And don't dilly-dally on the way".
Off went the van with me home packed in it.
I walked behind with me old cock linnet.
But I dillied and dallied,
Dallied and dillied;
Lost the van and don't know where to roam.
Now whose gonna put up with the old iron bedstead
If I can't find my way home?

I gave a helping hand
With the marble wash hand-stand,
And straight, he wasn't getting on so bad.
All at once, the car-man bloke
Had an accident and broke,
Well, the nicest bit of china that we had.
You'll understand, of course,
I was cross about the loss.
Same as any other human woman would.
But I soon got over that,
And we had a little chat
'Cos it's little things like that what does you good.
(Chorus)

I'm in such a mess.
I don't know the address,
Don't even know the blessed neighbourhood.
And I feel as if I might
Have to stay out all the night.
And that ain't a goin' to do me any good.
I don't make no complaint
But I'm coming over faint,
What I want now's a good substantial feed,
And I sort 'of kind of feel,
If I don't soon have a meal,
I shall have to rob the linnet of its seed!
(Chorus)

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