

# 'Mod movement in Quality Street clothes': British popular music and pantomime, 1955-1975

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**'Mod Movement in Quality Street Clothes': British Popular Music and Pantomime, 1955-75**

Introduction

Theatre critic and pantomime enthusiast Charles Lewsen described the scene vividly. The inveterate performer Dorothy Ward, appearing, at sixty-seven, as 'principal boy' in *Dick Whittington* at the Liverpool Pavilion Theatre in 1957, astonished her audience with an unexpected musical number. In character as a downcast Whittington, and serenading Tommy, her cat, Ward suddenly launched into a show-stopping rendition of 'Singin' the Blues', a Guy Mitchell song which had recently become a chart hit for another Tommy – namely, the young British rock 'n' roll singer Tommy Steele.<sup>1</sup> The 'panache and attack' of her performance 'had [Lewsen] gasping', although he admitted to finding the choice of song somewhat unsettling in view of her age, 'feeling somehow that [he] would not like to see [his] grandmother behaving thus.' Nevertheless, Lewsen interpreted Ward's choice of song for this, her final, pantomime role as 'a magnificent act of defiance' on her part. After all, while she, with decades of experience, performed that night to a 'rather thin house', elsewhere in the same city, Steele himself, unknown until barely a year previously, was making his debut pantomime appearance in the Royal Court Theatre production of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. "Sing, sing", Ward ordered the depleted audience, as she performed Steele's song. "Sing like you used to".<sup>2</sup> Thus did a sexagenarian veteran respond to changing times – by using pantomime conventions to showcase a new style of music, whilst acknowledging, in her instruction to the audience, that the world within which she had built her career seemed to be altering rapidly, and not for the better. This was not necessarily a story of unremitting desperation, however; Hugh Johnson, another Ward devotee who had witnessed this production, remarked that 'receipts increased week by week', despite the competition from 'the young and popular' Steele. He also suggested that, in singing Steele's song, Ward was not necessarily diverging significantly from her traditional theatrical act; when touring on the prestigious Moss Empires circuit, Ward's renditions of 'the hits of the day' had always, he recalled, been integral to her performances.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, even if some sadness had surrounded those swansong performances, Ward did not publicly express bitterness. In an interview with the *Times* held during the 1957 season, she was, in fact, generous towards Steele and the innovations which performers of his type had introduced, declaring that '[if]

this sort of thing can bring new life and new audiences to pantomime ... so much the better.’<sup>4</sup> As she reviewed a long, distinguished career, Ward could perhaps afford to be magnanimous; she and her husband, Shaun Glenville, had been part of a well-loved generation of Variety theatre performers which had found a natural home within pantomime. Variety and pantomime, although distinct traditions, had forged a strong relationship since the late nineteenth century, when Augustus Harris began to introduce stars from Music Hall, the ‘parent’ tradition of Variety, into his Drury Lane pantomimes. By the mid-twentieth century, Variety stars had become masters of pantomime, with versatile performers like Ward commanding the respect and affection of audiences. However, by 1957, Ward apparently recognised that, with such traditions seemingly declining, and inexperienced youngsters like Steele proving more lucrative for theatres, times were changing rapidly.

The purpose of this article is to explore the circumstances which gave rise to this particular situation – specifically, the introduction of younger popstars such as Steele into pantomime, and the responses of ‘the old guard’, as personified by experienced troupers like Ward, to this development. It also examines the further evolution of the relationship between pantomime and popular music, and their continuing impact on each other, during the late 1960s and beyond. It has certainly been acknowledged that the young generation of pioneering British pop performers – from rock ‘n’ rollers like Steele, Cliff Richard or Adam Faith and skiffle artistes such as Lonnie Donegan to early sixties ‘beat groups’ like Gerry and the Pacemakers and Freddie and the Dreamers – were frequently introduced into Christmas pantomime productions. This partially represented an extension of their already considerable connections to the wider sphere of Variety; indeed, most early British pop performers featured in Variety shows as they established themselves on the entertainment scene.<sup>5</sup> However, circumstances like these usually merit only fleeting acknowledgement in works on the period, tending to be cited, straightforwardly, as evidence of the underdeveloped state of the post-war British pop industry – tales of the ‘bad old days’ when rock *et al* were assumed to be ephemeral trends, and the older values of Variety-derived culture remained prevalent.<sup>6</sup> Despite this, broader scholarly interest in the period between the mid-fifties and the mid-1960s has recently been revived, as historians question straightforward assumptions about youthful rebellion versus oppressive *mores* and a widening ‘generation gap’.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, exploring the involvement of popular musicians in both Variety and pantomime provides, in a particularly distinctive manner, insights into the peculiar, often complex inter-generational dynamics of performance

cultures during this transitional era. However, thus far, and despite broader reappraisals of this period, commentators have seldom recognised this. There has been scant effort to consider the character of the pantomime appearances made by popular musicians at this time – they are, generally, largely trivialised or buried within fleeting accounts of ‘Variety’ participation – and little nuanced analysis of the responses of the world of pantomime itself to the incursions of these inexperienced newcomers has been undertaken.<sup>8</sup> Social historians have, apparently, been slow to exhibit sustained interest in manifestations of youth culture such as popular music.<sup>9</sup> The study of performers from this formative period, especially in the years immediately preceding the rise of the Beatles, has been particularly neglected; frequently dismissed as artistically sterile, the era is often deemed interesting only as a precursor to the more imaginative, sophisticated rock of the later 1960s. Similarly, pantomime itself, particularly in its twentieth century incarnations, remains ripe for further academic exploration. Oliver Double’s recent, pioneering study of Variety discusses both pantomime and the position of popular musicians within Variety, but neither of these is his primary concern.<sup>10</sup> Millie Taylor’s work constitutes an excellent study of pantomime performance, although her focus is not unilaterally historical, while the recent monograph of Jeffrey Richards and the collection of essays edited by Jim Davis provide helpful analytical context on various aspects of the medium, but principally discuss the Victorian era.<sup>11</sup> Although not a specialist study of the art-form, nor a comprehensive survey of all types of production (commercial, professional pantomimes command the greatest attention, despite passing consideration of repertory and amateur productions), this article explores the changing character of pantomime during the turbulent post-war years, as popular theatre found itself struggling to compete with modern counter-attractions. However, it is mainly concerned both with the impact which popular music and musicians made on pantomime, and with the impact of pantomime participation upon musicians. These two apparently incompatible cultural forms forged a relationship which, as it traversed generational boundaries, proved, at times, complex, often mutually beneficial, and, ultimately, remarkably enduring. While, undoubtedly, twentieth-century pantomime owed much to Variety, the two genres were also distinct from one another, each in possession of its own traditions and characteristics. Recognition of this is also fundamental to this study, particularly when exploring the evolution of the relationship between pantomime and popular music beyond the mid-sixties. The emergence of more sophisticated rock music forged hierarchical dichotomies between ‘artistic’ performers – the Beatles, the Kinks or the Who, for instance – and those who became rather dismissively labelled as ‘family entertainers’.<sup>12</sup> It was from this latter

category, comprising such acts as Cliff Richard, Tommy Steele, Freddie Garrity and Cilla Black, that pantomime performers continued, largely, to be drawn. Immersed in lucrative, individualistic experimentation, meanwhile, rock musicians apparently had little inclination to pursue such routes. Nevertheless, one particularly peculiar irony of this hierarchy, as noted by Barry Faulk and Jon Stratton, is the fact that the world of Music Hall, Variety and pantomime exerted a profound influence on many of these experimental musicians.<sup>13</sup> It remained a source of distinctively 'British' inspiration for many, even as they avoided becoming too tightly bound by its apparently outdated conventions. Yet such appraisals seldom consider the specific influence of pantomime, as opposed to an amorphous 'Variety' or 'Music Hall', on these musicians. Analysing their attitudes towards pantomime often yields surprising results, and further illuminates the fruitful, curious relationship forged between popular music and pantomime during the late twentieth century.

After an account of the relationship between Variety and pantomime, the article outlines the special significance which pantomime acquired as Variety struggled after the Second World War. The circumstances leading to the involvement of popstars in pantomime are then explored, alongside the reactions of older performers to their sudden prominence within cast-lists. Some resentment emerged, as detractors sought to safeguard their conceptions of pantomime 'tradition'. However, the generosity of Dorothy Ward generally seemed more typical than exceptional, although this did not prevent pantomime creators from gently, yet pointedly, poking fun at the newcomers, and at the music which had assumed such popularity so absurdly swiftly. The distinctive conventions of pantomime afforded older practitioners particularly creative scope for such lampooning, although the humour was usually good-natured. For more ambitious producers, however, the introduction of 'new blood' into pantomime constituted an opportunity to update the genre for a younger audience; the lavish pantomimes produced for the London Palladium by Albert J. Knight, and starring such musicians as Cliff Richard, Cilla Black and Tommy Steele, are particularly significant examples of such an aspiration. While this innovative approach was not universally adopted, the singular cultural dynamics of pantomime undoubtedly inspired further experimentation, particularly as it intersected with the zany irreverence of the late 1960s 'counter-culture'. Lastly, the article examines the perception that, overall, pantomime participation remained the preserve of those who had 'failed' to embrace artistic rock, and that, while critically-acclaimed musicians might have been inspired by pantomime as part of an interest in a

vaguely-defined 'Music Hall' tradition, they would never have countenanced active participation in commercial productions. However, the influence of pantomime on popular musicians of all types has been more varied than such straightforward, hierarchized perceptions assume. Ultimately, the fluidity of pantomime, and its embodiment of apparently contradictory attributes – from nostalgic family-friendliness to subversion and modernism – rendered it significant to musicians from various backgrounds. Exploring the relationship between popular music and pantomime, thus, illuminates many aspects of post-war culture, encouraging historians to reappraise preconceptions concerning inter-generational and inter-cultural dynamics, and to reconsider the manner in which music styles are categorised and implicitly judged retrospectively. It also urges social historians to re-examine the singular world of post-war pantomime and – whilst respecting its fundamental purpose as light-hearted entertainment – to reassess seriously its later twentieth-century manifestations.

#### Intertwining Traditions: Variety and Pantomime

Although by the early twentieth century they had become strongly interconnected – even mutually reinforcing – Variety and pantomime had their own unique paths of evolution. Variety had emerged as a sort of commercialised successor to the more chaotic Music-Hall tradition, with entrepreneurs such as Sir Oswald Stoll seeking to make it more family-friendly, structured and diverse.<sup>14</sup> There was, however, no wholesale supplanting of one tradition by the other; the continued prominence of older Music Hall performers within Variety served to blur boundaries and smooth transitions. Nevertheless, as Double demonstrates, Variety developed carefully-crafted programmes, ensuring that audiences would be, by turns, entertained by comics, astounded by skilful 'specialities', and moved by gifted singers.<sup>15</sup> Commentators had predicted the demise of Variety at various junctures throughout the early twentieth century, amid keen competition from cinemas, ballrooms and other leisure venues. Nevertheless, at first, it proved redoubtably adaptable – for instance, by showcasing stars of the new medium of radio.<sup>16</sup> Such resilience was not, however, indefinite. Although in the immediate post-war years it enjoyed 'one last flourish', by the mid-1950s theatrical Variety seemed, finally, in inexorable decline – no longer satisfying a choosy, television-orientated public.<sup>17</sup> In view of this decline, it is ironic that, as a style of entertainment, Variety actually proved ideal for television.<sup>18</sup> British audiences clearly

continued to enjoy variety-style entertainment, through programmes such as ATV's *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*, but since television could present world-class performers, local theatrical offerings often paled by comparison. This proved disastrous for theatres; many venues, including several Moss Empires, closed altogether.<sup>19</sup> Survivors frantically experimented with suitable counter-attractions, and, as a last effort to repeat past successes by capitalising on cultural innovations, managers began to book young popular music acts, hoping to bring the newly-affluent, much-courted 'youth' into surviving theatres. The 'new' music-styles favoured by teenagers, such as rock 'n' roll or skiffle, though often considered worrying or facile, could nevertheless prove lucrative to those businesses which were willing to showcase them,<sup>20</sup> and young popular musicians became star attractions on the Variety stage from the mid-1950s onwards. Such arrangements were mutually beneficial; certainly, few expected such music to survive long-term, and even pop managers like the infamous Larry Parnes, who managed Steele and other emergent singers, accepted unquestioningly that the music of his charges should be positioned within established 'show-business' frameworks.<sup>21</sup> However, others argued that the new genres were 'here for keeps', their all-important 'solid beat' enhancing their potential for wider appeal.<sup>22</sup> Whatever the future held, though, there were few sufficiently large venues capable of showcasing the music commercially, while Variety theatres possessed the required seating-capacity. Thus, a year prior to his pantomime debut, in November 1956, Tommy Steele was catapulted to the 'top of the bill' position at the Sunderland Empire, a feat emulated by various emergent rock 'n' roll and skiffle stars.<sup>23</sup> Before the eventual introduction of pop-orientated 'package shows', musicians generally appeared, somewhat incongruously, on a mixed bill, alongside acrobats, comics and specialities. However, their potential to attract diverse audiences assured them a place in surviving theatres for the foreseeable future.

It duly occurred to theatre and music managers that pantomime performances, frequently staged at the venues in which the young acts were already playing, could provide further income and publicity. Having been instant Variety 'headliners', popular musicians thus became pantomime stars. As Steele was appearing in *Goldilocks*, Lonnie Donegan was starring in *Aladdin* at the Chiswick Empire; thereafter, pantomime appearances seemed almost a rite of passage for aspiring popstars. Cliff Richard and the Shadows debuted in pantomime in Stockton in 1959, Adam Faith in *Dick Whittington* in 1960, and contemporaries from Joe Brown to Marty Wilde duly followed suit.<sup>24</sup>

In many ways, the introduction of the famous popstars into pantomime, following their prominent Variety appearances, was no more than a fresh example of a practice which had been evident throughout the twentieth century. The introduction of Music Hall celebrities, such as Dan Leno and Marie Lloyd, into Drury Lane productions had promoted the increasing intersection of Variety and pantomime throughout the late Victorian era.<sup>25</sup> These artistes contributed, effectively, to a modern redefinition of pantomime; the productions in which they appeared certainly bore scant resemblance to their early-modern predecessors. Originally derived from the French/Italian *Harlequinade* and *Commedia dell'Arte*, British pantomime only gradually developed its more distinctive slapstick and comic characteristics, principally through the influence of Joseph Grimaldi, celebrated clown of the early nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup> The medium evolved further during the Victorian era, adopting many of its most recognisable conventions, including the usage of rhyming couplets in the script – an innovation credited to the prolific scriptwriter E.L. Blanchard – and the reinvention of the *Harlequinade* ‘transformation scene’ as a showcase for elaborate scenery.<sup>27</sup> Pantomime was often strongly satirical, with the mocking of contemporary notables an established component of Victorian productions, but its importance as Christmas family entertainment would, equally, increase in significance during the early twentieth century.<sup>28</sup>

The introduction of Music-Hall stars into pantomime helped the genre to evolve further and to establish more firmly the foundations of the modern-day production.<sup>29</sup> Character-comic Dan Leno promoted the centrality of the ‘dame’, a tradition continued by such veterans as George Robey and Clarkson Rose, while Evelyn Laye and Dorothy Ward were feted ‘principal boys’, strutting as youths whilst daringly clad in tights.<sup>30</sup> Pantomimes also, increasingly, showcased the talents of Variety performers, with storylines incorporating suitable pauses for inclusion of their familiar songs and ‘business’.<sup>31</sup> For some, such as Blanchard himself, these innovations represented the death of a purer tradition and a compromising of the childlike ‘magic’ associated with Victorian pantomime.<sup>32</sup> Pronouncements that pantomime had betrayed its ‘golden era’ became, effectively, a perpetual ‘lament down the ages’.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, gradually, Variety performers shed this aura of controversy, until they were viewed, nostalgically, as conventional performance practitioners. Clearly, as Jack Waterman observed, ‘[t]radition’ in pantomime was ‘...a very flexible word’.<sup>34</sup> The genre had established recognisable characteristics, yet it was also highly malleable. Players such as Cyril Fletcher, Arthur Askey and Terry Scott, all of whom became



popular ‘dames’ in the post-war decades, continued both to preserve and develop the ‘traditions’ established by earlier stars. They succeeded while, and at least in part *because*, they also pursued distinguished careers in cinema, radio and, eventually, television. Pantomime had particular attractions for such performers. As opportunities to tread the boards dwindled, it became, as comedian Eric Morecambe wrote in 1972, ‘one of the few all-embracing theatrical happenings left’ – a chance to recapture the ‘emotional ... rapport’ unique to live performance. It also afforded players a secure income, increased visibility, and, thus, ‘bigger box-office potential’.<sup>35</sup> Pantomime now seemed, for its champions, a cherished theatrical tradition – one which should be jealously protected as its close relation, Variety, seemed to decline – and yet, evidently, its connections to modern celebrity were firmly established, and would evolve further. Indeed, even before ‘teenage music’ became a potent commercial force, well-known popular musicians had appeared in pantomimes. Successful singers from the ‘transitional’ pre-rock ‘n’ roll era, such as David Whitfield and Dickie Valentine, had generally espoused Variety traditions, but also reflected influences from effusive American ‘crooners’ like Frank Sinatra or Johnnie Ray.<sup>36</sup> Their teenage followings, similarly, were not wholly eradicated by the rise of rock ‘n’ roll.<sup>37</sup> Such performers prefigured the introduction of younger popstars like Steele into pantomime; their eventual inclusion in panto constituted no more than a fresh variation on a theme which had been recurrent throughout the century.

#### Innovation or Travesty? Reactions to Popular Musicians in Pantomime

Despite this continuity, for some, the construction of entire pantomimes around the still-unproven younger artistes was one evolution too far. Their Variety appearances had already attracted controversy. Experienced performers often resented the prime billings which the novices automatically received (and the higher fees which they commanded), while older audience-members became repelled by the amplified music and the alleged rowdiness of fans.<sup>38</sup> Rock ‘n’ roll had gained a particularly bad reputation in this regard; considering the widely-publicised accounts of ‘Teddy Boy riots’ in theatres during such concerts, it is unsurprising that the music failed to endear itself to traditional show people.<sup>39</sup> Thus, although popular music was not necessarily directly blamed for the ‘death’ of theatrical Variety, it became, for many, an unwelcome, undignified witness to its decline.

The involvement of the musicians in pantomime certainly allowed detractors to reassert such criticisms straightforwardly, but concerns relating more specifically to pantomime traditions were also expressed; indeed, these anxieties almost seemed more pronounced than the criticisms surrounding broader Variety performances. Despite the flexibility and comparatively recent origins of its ‘traditions’, pantomime commanded considerable nostalgic affection from the public, and performers and commentators often harboured precise opinions on how it should be performed.<sup>40</sup> It was frequently suggested that, by using pantomime as a showcase for popstars, directors risked compromising its ‘traditional exuberant spirit’ and ‘fun’.<sup>41</sup> The pantomime scriptwriter and performer Norman Robbins, witnessing the stars of ‘teenage music ... join[ing] the dwindling number of Variety performers in pantomime’, expressed some reservations regarding their apparent compulsion ‘to promote their latest record, no matter how unsuitable to the role they were playing’,<sup>42</sup> such songs often being introduced with scant regard for their relationship to the plot.<sup>43</sup> Although pantomime had long incorporated such unexpected breaks to accommodate speciality acts, some detractors found the pop tunes more disruptive, as they compromised both the flow of the production and the child-centric dynamic with which pantomime was now associated.<sup>44</sup> ‘Children must not be disappointed at Christmas’, *The Stage* declared in 1960, hoping that, via pantomime (often a child’s first theatrical experience), youngsters would ‘become life-long habitués of live entertainment.’<sup>45</sup> Extensive modernisation was, thus, often deemed unnecessary and unhelpful. Cyril Fletcher, who became, alongside wife Betty Astell, a champion of ‘family pantomime’, felt that it was a ‘mistake’ for popular music to be so unimaginatively deployed within the productions.<sup>46</sup> In 1963 he asked, ‘Who wants to go [to a pantomime] and hear pop songs done yet again? Children ... are happier with ‘The Twelve Days of Christmas’ or ... something they’ve always known’.<sup>47</sup>

For some critics, introducing pop stars into pantomime seemed to encourage, whether deliberately or inadvertently, further unwelcome alterations to pantomime conventions. In particular, it threatened the tradition of the female principal boy. While actor Norman Wisdom (in the Palladium’s 1956 *Aladdin* production) was the first well-known performer to challenge this convention post-war, and although Gerald Frow notes that such role-reversal was not ubiquitous, it undoubtedly grew more commonplace, as singers Frankie Vaughan,

Cliff Richard, Frank Ifield and Tommy Steele all assumed principal male roles during this period.<sup>48</sup> Critics also disliked the excited screaming which the presence of popstars could provoke among certain sectors of the audience.<sup>49</sup> ‘If this is the way pantomime is going’, remarked one reviewer, in the wake of Vaughan’s Palladium appearance, ‘it will speedily become a yearly parade of television performers going through their usual paces. By that time there will be little point in taking the children along.’<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, Robbins acknowledged that, while many of the youngsters struggled in pantomime, ‘some’, in fact, ‘made the adjustment from pop singer to pantomime star and were well received’.<sup>51</sup> Those reviewers who recognised the rather chaotic fluidity which had always surrounded panto were often pleasantly surprised by the performances of the newcomers. If they entered whole-heartedly into the pantomime spirit, then their inexperience and occasional bouts of record-plugging could be overlooked. Lonnie Donegan’s exuberant performance-style seemed compatible with pantomime, and his efforts to embrace different ‘sphere[s] of show-business’ were acknowledged by publicists.<sup>52</sup> Freddie (Garrity) and the Dreamers earned praise from *The Stage* during their 1964 *Cinderella* appearances for becoming ‘an integral part of the show’, with Garrity’s distinctive ‘clowning’ particularly appreciated. ‘[P]ops’ were certainly present, but intermingled appropriately with ‘[c]olour, spectacle ... charm and family comedy.’<sup>53</sup> Performers like Donegan, Garrity, Steele and Joe Brown gravitated more naturally towards pantomime because all conveyed, via their stage-acts, elements of the sort of ‘character’ performance which many of the more seasoned players exhibited; all had discernible links with particular localities (Donegan, Steele and Brown espoused a recognisably ‘Cockney’ style, while Mancunian Garrity drew upon elements of northern Variety traditions in his stage-act) and all endeavoured to become distinctive entertainers. Brown, Garrity and Donegan all played the role of ‘Wishee Washee’ in their respective productions of *Aladdin*, a part which required them to embrace various established pantomime conventions, such as extended ‘business’ with ‘dame’ Widow Twankey, and messy, chaotic ‘slosh scenes’.<sup>54</sup> Conversely, Adam Faith seemed rather less at home within the broader Variety environment, and his autobiography suggests that he was never sure of his own vocal abilities.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, he, too, was praised by one reviewer for gamely embracing the form. Scruples notwithstanding, Faith loved the theatre, and he seemed committed to performing pantomime convincingly. Although his 1960 *Dick Whittington* performance had, in the critic’s view, ‘several characteristics of a celebrity

visit' – including the obligatory rendition of his latest hits – Faith nonetheless 'join[ed] good-naturedly in the nonsense, ha[d] water squirted in his face ... and generally play[ed] his part'.<sup>56</sup> Thus, while, as Robbins remarked, some musicians seemed more compatible with pantomime than others, those who tried to respect traditions and participate fully, but without 'completely steal[ing] the show', were acknowledged for their efforts.<sup>57</sup>

Similarly, while veterans such as Fletcher expressed unease about the manner in which the involvement of popstars had affected conventions, there were others who, like Dorothy Ward, seemed to accept such changes, especially if they helped to safeguard the future of pantomime. Fellow veteran Clarkson Rose was similarly open-minded. 'Talk about the good old days ... Well, they were good', he said, 'but there are excellent things now, and there will be more.'<sup>58</sup> Arthur Askey believed that 'so long as [pantomime] producers [could] keep abreast of the times, [its] appeal [would] never diminish.' Although perceiving 'incongruities' in the deployment of certain pop stars in recent productions, Askey still believed that the medium had progressed since the era in which the star of a production 'would insist on doing his music hall act, no matter whether it fitted the story or not'. He also praised the vibrant yet apposite musical contributions made by the Shadows to *Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp*, the 1964 Palladium pantomime in which they had appeared together.<sup>59</sup>

Many older performers offered unstinting help and friendship to their younger co-stars, and a strong sense of camaraderie developed among cast-members. This inter-generational rapport had, in fact, been remarkably commonplace within the wider Variety sphere; versatile entertainer Des O'Connor advised many singers, including Lonnie Donegan and Cliff Richard, on improving their stagecraft.<sup>60</sup> Veteran bandleader Billy Cotton nurtured younger musical acts in his popular Variety programmes, believing that those with genuine ability would inexorably confound the perception that they were talentless interlopers.<sup>61</sup> Equal generosity of attitude was evident among experienced pantomime-players. Joe Brown, who debuted in pantomime in 1962, recalled receiving invaluable training from consummate 'dame' George Bolton, a 'wonderful man and a real traditionalist, [who] ... taught [him] an awful lot'.<sup>62</sup> Bruce Welch of the Shadows had relished the 'marvellous experience' of working with Askey on *Aladdin*, and Cliff Richard, who starred in two of the Palladium's most successful 1960s pantomimes, recalled great friendship in the cast, and fondly

remembered the rapport which he developed with *Cinderella* co-stars Terry Scott and Hugh Lloyd in 1966.<sup>63</sup>

Despite this, there is no doubt that modern popular music styles offered creative opportunities for humour to pantomime veterans. Variety players, always observant of socio-cultural change, had recognised the potential of pop to inspire jokes and routines; whether impersonating the mannerisms of particular performers, or throwing ‘quick-fire’ pop references into solo routines, or creating ‘spoof’-versions of hit-songs, artistes from Bruce Forsyth to Hylda Baker and Billy Cotton found means of identifying and exploiting amusing aspects of the contemporary music scene.<sup>64</sup> The humour could, at times, appear somewhat snide; however, established players like Baker or Cotton, adept musicians in their own right, whilst recognising the fact that they were too old to relate particularly credibly to modern pop, tended to utilise the popular trends to illuminate elements of the ridiculous within their own comic personae. Pantomime further extended this tendency within Variety, but its distinctive conventions, and roots in satire and burlesque, allowed it to present pop in particularly enterprising and, frequently, eccentrically entertaining ways.

While straightforward renditions of hit-songs had long had a place within pantomimes, there were myriad ways in which pop performances and references could add distinctive humour to a production. Jokes about the music scene were liberally integrated into pantomime scripts, since topical gaps remained, as Taylor highlights, vital ingredients of pantomime.<sup>65</sup> Scripts from the period frequently contained political jokes, as well as references to current trends; that these were frequently delivered by characters dressed in discernibly historical/folkloric costumes testifies to the central importance, within panto, of what Taylor terms ‘incongruous association for comic effect.’<sup>66</sup> The unique developments in popular music and youth culture also afforded ample opportunity for such humour during this period, perhaps particularly since they were affecting pantomime so directly.<sup>67</sup> When Dick Emery appeared as a very modern Puss in Boots at the Palladium in 1962, alongside Frankie Vaughan, there was a running joke throughout the panto based on the contemporary usage of the word ‘cat’ (‘hep cat’/cool cat), one scene involving Emery and fellow cats dancing the twist in a nightclub. A draft script for this pantomime also indicates references to the names ‘dished out’ by pop managers to their protégés – ‘Rip Fury ... Biff Nasty’ – which clearly lampooned the

famously formulaic manner in which Larry Parnes renamed his clients.<sup>68</sup> When, in the Manchester *Aladdin* production of 1965/66, the duplicitous Abanazar informed Widow Twankey that he was ‘a rolling stone’, this remark triggered a string of quick-fire references to ‘beat group’ names (‘I think you’re a Pretty Thing’ ... ‘Oi! He’s one of the Searchers’ ...).<sup>69</sup>

Modern songs could also be given inventive ‘twists’ for humorous effect. In the *Aladdin* production of 1965-66, for example, Freddie Garrity’s first entrance was heralded via an amusingly modified, accelerated version of his hit-song ‘You Were Made for Me’, performed by The Dreamers.<sup>70</sup> Actor Roy Hudd recalled a mid-sixties pantomime performance in which Frank Ifield, as Robin Hood, performed his hit-song ‘I Remember You’, accompanied by stalwart harmonica player Arthur Tolcher, in costume as Friar Tuck.<sup>71</sup> Emery also lampooned Ifield’s much-imitated yodelling singing-style (‘I Remember Mee-oow’) in *Puss in Boots*.<sup>72</sup> The ‘songsheet’ segment, traditionally deployed at the end of productions, wherein principals would lead an exuberant audience singalong, also provided scope for amusing or unexpected usage of popular music. When Hylda Baker and comic-magician Tommy Cooper appeared together in *Aladdin* at the Wimbledon Theatre in 1963, the musical number chosen for the ‘songsheet’ was Dora Bryan’s novelty hit ‘All I Want for Christmas is a Beatle’.<sup>73</sup> The performance of contemporary songs by veterans like Baker, or, indeed, Dorothy Ward, was also illustrative of the humorous ‘incongruity’ which Taylor identified within pantomime.<sup>74</sup>

Many of the pantomimes in which ‘stars’ appeared – especially those produced at high-profile theatres like the Palladium – were carefully crafted for the occasion, and would thus reflect contemporary culture in a very specific manner. However, as scriptwriter Henry Marshall observed, producers of ‘commercial’ pantomimes frequently utilised ‘skeleton’ scripts, to which ‘vast cuts and changes’ could be made in order to accommodate casting updates.<sup>75</sup> Such scripts could also be relatively easily modified, annually, to reflect new socio-political or musical developments. In this way, jokes about popular music had the potential to become infinitely adaptable. This was also applicable to amateur and repertory pantomimes; although Norman Robbins was not keen on the inconsequential introduction of pop-songs into pantomimes, his own 1980 *Aladdin* script, designed for all types of company, demonstrates the ease with which the latest hits could be built into a pantomime, whilst

compromising neither the integrity nor the humour of the scene. In Robbins's script, Wishee Washee 'decide[s] to become a pop singer' to assist the impoverished Widow Twankey. 'Well ... everybody knows that pop singers make a lot of money, don't they,' he declares, '... especially the ones who can't sing at all.' Dressed in 'an outrageous "pop singer" outfit', 'Wishee' performs a suitable (presumably contemporary) choice of song, with 'possible audience participation'.<sup>76</sup> Such a scenario, both mocking of, and giving centrality to, modern pop music, could clearly be updated as necessary.

Nevertheless, some non-commercial pantomimes became renowned for their original scripts and scores. Henry Marshall's own pantomimes, performed at Salisbury Playhouse from the 1950s to the 1980s, illustrated this vibrantly.<sup>77</sup> Since such productions were not constructed around 'star' performers, they had additional flexibility, and often reflected 'contemporary tastes' imaginatively, with 'deeper sympathy and greater wit'.<sup>78</sup> *Panto!*, journal of the British Pantomime Association, offered a script 'exchange service' to members seeking suitable productions, and among the more intriguing offerings for 1972 was John Coleby's *Seven Up!*, a 'panto a go go', based on *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and featuring a social welfare officer ('Doc'), a group of musically-minded youths with discernibly pop-derived names (these include 'Mick', 'Tich' and 'Dozy'), and a group called The Tweakers, whose 'disc' ultimately begins 'soaring up the Charts'.<sup>79</sup> Beyond the commercial sector, therefore, pop clearly inspired some distinctively experimental pantomimes.

Despite such innovation, Taylor observes that twentieth-century pantomime productions generally favoured a 'mix of [musical] genres', from 'contemporary chart songs' to 'traditional' numbers and 'older' material from 'musicals and music-hall'.<sup>80</sup> Yet amid such diversity, pop frequently had a specific, dynamic, role to play. In their need to provide 'something familiar to every part of the audience, from grannies to grandchildren', pantomimes could attract a younger audience by embracing popular music, and placing it at the heart of the production, whilst maintaining the interest of parents and grandparents, not only by deploying more traditional material, but also by exposing humorous elements within the newer styles of music.<sup>81</sup> Pantomime, in this way, seemed to manage a distinctively madcap inter-generational stance, facilitating the light-hearted merging of, and encounters between, older and newer styles of performance and popular culture. The economic

opportunity which popular music had initially offered pantomime thus opened up, in due course, a wide array of cultural and artistic possibilities.

‘A Gavotte Danced to Guitar Music’: Pop and the Transformation of Pantomime

For some scriptwriters and producers, the introduction of popular musicians into pantomime presented far more than pretexts for fresh jokes. Ambitious producers such as Freddie Carpenter of Howard and Wyndham Theatres, or Albert J. Knight, responsible for most of the 1960s Palladium pantomimes, saw the presence of popstars as a singular opportunity to overhaul the medium more profoundly for the modern age. Carpenter later became renowned for the innovative, distinctively ‘Scottish’ ‘Jamie’ pantomime series, but before this he had produced, alongside Harold Fielding, the ambitious 1958 London Coliseum *Cinderella* which starred Tommy Steele as Buttons.<sup>82</sup> Having seen the similarly-titled Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, Fielding decided to devise a pantomime version of the production, with the role of Buttons especially created for Steele.<sup>83</sup> ‘Why should pantomime be the only [theatrical] branch to stand still?’ Carpenter demanded in 1963. Contemporary panto, he believed, ‘should be given the same treatment as a modern musical.’<sup>84</sup> His *Cinderella*, thus, aimed to blend essential features of pantomime with bold innovations, and undoubtedly the involvement of Steele was one of the most potent indications of the latter. He was clearly intended to be one of the principal attractions of the show. Surviving scripts indicate scenes in which the singer – who was by now cultivating a deep love for live theatre – engages in extended slapstick sketches (elements of panto which the show retained) and performs song-and-dance numbers (including a duet with actor Jimmy Edwards in which Buttons is described, via Steele’s real-life identity, as ‘King of Bermondsey’, and a passing reference is made to his hit-song ‘Butterfingers’).<sup>85</sup> The typically ‘incongruous’ contemporary references are certainly occasionally present in the script, with jokes about ‘juvenile detergent[s]’ and the ‘hand-jive’ in evidence.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, most songs utilised in the production were the original Oscar and Hammerstein numbers. Clearly Fielding and Carpenter hoped to create a generic hybrid, drawing from both older and emergent theatrical traditions, and enhancing the appeal of their creation by capitalising on Steele’s popularity and rapidly-evolving, distinctive stage identity. Fundamentally, however, *Cinderella* seemed as much a musical as



it was a pantomime, and Carpenter evidently believed that such hybridization was essential for the medium if it were to survive.

The Palladium pantomimes also became noteworthy for their distinctive intermingling of tradition and innovation, a mixture in which pop, once again, played a crucial role. Such was the reputation of the theatre, and the potency of the association between managing-director Val Parnell and the Grade Brothers' agency, which managed many top entertainers, that it was possible to assemble diverse 'dream' casts comprising both Variety stalwarts and younger newcomers.<sup>87</sup> Some of the most celebrated and experienced of performers – including Arthur Askey, Hugh Lloyd and Terry Scott – appeared in Palladium pantomimes during this period. Alongside such seasoned professionals were placed contemporary singing-stars, in keeping with changing times and tastes; Frankie Vaughan starred in *Puss in Boots* in 1962, and Frank Ifield appeared in *Babes in the Wood* in 1965. Tommy Steele made his Palladium pantomime debut as *Dick Whittington* in 1969, and Cilla Black helped to restore the female 'principal boy' tradition to the theatre when she played *Aladdin* the following year. However, among the most artistically ambitious of the Palladium's attempts to fuse old and new cultural forms were the two pantomimes which featured Cliff Richard – *Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp* (1964), in which he and the Shadows appeared with Askey and Charlie Cairoli, and *Cinderella* (1966), which also featured Terry Scott and Hugh Lloyd as the Ugly Sisters, and an appearance by 'adorable' elephant Tanya, a Palladium favourite.<sup>88</sup> Knight believed that introducing figures like Richard into the productions would, despite possible controversy, increase the size and variety of the audiences. He was especially keen to see the pantomimes 'move with the times' and become 'a success with the teenagers'.<sup>89</sup> Certainly, there was, as Michael Grade later recalled, no expense spared on these productions, which included ambitious filmed special-effect sequences and lavish sets.<sup>90</sup> The Shadows themselves composed the music for both of Richard's pantomimes. Versatile and experienced musicians by this time, they devised scores which, like their own hit-records, blended contemporary idioms with the catchy, structured melodiousness required of stage tunes. The 'pop' influences in *Aladdin* were, certainly, relatively muted, particularly since most of the songs were accompanied, both live and on the soundtrack-album, by an orchestra.<sup>91</sup> Peter Lewis of the *Daily Mail*, weary of the 'irrelevant beat music' which seemed ubiquitous in the Beatles era, admired the 'attractive numbers which actually fit what's going on [in the plot]', and expressed relief that 'easier, sweeter, un-Liverpudlian music' had been created by the

Shadows for *Aladdin*.<sup>92</sup> The *Cinderella* soundtrack-album conveys, by comparison, more of a pronounced ‘beat’ essence.<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, the *Guardian*’s Philip Hope-Wallace considered this ‘modern pop pantomime ... a good breed of the traditional and the televisual.’<sup>94</sup> ‘We get the traditional villagey opening’, observed Ronald Hayman of *Queen* magazine. ‘Then Cliff Richard rides in on a horse to bash out a beat number, and the dancers whirl into mod movement in their Quality Street clothes ... There is a gavotte danced to guitar music ...’<sup>95</sup> Such descriptions vividly convey the ambitions of the production. Programmes for both productions also emphasised that they should be seen as both integral to, and innovative departures from, British pantomime ‘tradition’. A biographical sketch of Knight stressed that, in *Aladdin*, he ‘had tried to blend together all the best of the traditional pantomime ... remembered by parents, with the exuberance and vitality of the young.’ The ‘exuberan[t]’ pop credentials of Richard and the Shadows were acknowledged, via publicity for their recent film *Wonderful Life*, and the ‘satirical’ short film *Rhythm and Greens*, made by The Shadows. However, the programme notes avoided overemphasizing the musical origins of either act, preferring to portray Richard as a well-rounded performer who had ‘climbed all the peaks’ of show-business success, and the Shadows as ‘an institution’, rather than ‘a group’, ‘[riding] high over ... trends and fads.’<sup>96</sup> By the mid-sixties, performers like Cliff Richard or Tommy Steele, although still widely perceived as popular musicians, were nonetheless sufficiently seasoned to be considered a fairly ‘safe bet’ for pantomime producers. Richard was, at this time, still a successful chart-singer, and his pantomimes evidently continued to attract love-struck youngsters.<sup>97</sup> Even as *Aladdin* began, however, ‘Beatlemania’ had firmly gripped the nation (as Lewis’s review inadvertently acknowledged); Richard was still much admired, but not exclusively by teenagers. With their status as youth idols somewhat diluted, yet not wholly eradicated, performers like Richard or Steele could be accommodated quite comfortably by pantomime, and the Palladium productions undoubtedly benefited from their youthful onstage personae and popularity. Their styles bore some ‘pop’ characteristics, but not in a manner which threatened to alienate older theatregoers; their pantomime appearances thus bridged generational divisions in particularly distinctive ways. Critics certainly observed the uniquely broad demographic profile of Palladium audiences, the much sought-after ‘teenagers’ appearing willing to accompany their parents to the theatre.<sup>98</sup>

Programmes for the Palladium pantomimes also firmly situated the productions within the historic traditions of British popular theatre; extensive biographies of Askey, Scott and Lloyd

were featured, as were short histories of pantomime and of the Palladium itself. In the latter, a catalogue of Palladium ‘stars’ positioned ‘Cliff Richard’ and ‘The Shadows’ in between ‘Sophie Tucker ... Norman Wisdom’, ‘Frank Ifield.... Arthur Askey [and] Cilla Black’. This almost casual intermingling of the names of senior and younger performers served to reflect the vision of a diverse, modern British entertainment which the Palladium sought to cultivate through its shows.<sup>99</sup> The innovative approach certainly proved lucrative; advance bookings for *Aladdin* apparently earned the theatre more than £100,000, and such was the demand for tickets that the season was extended until April 1965.<sup>100</sup> Versions of these pantomimes were also subsequently staged at major provincial theatres; the Manchester *Aladdin* production featuring Freddie Garrity was, effectively, an adaptation of the 1964 Palladium rendition, with Des O’Connor as the eponymous hero.<sup>101</sup>

Nevertheless, the affluent Palladium became, increasingly, something of an exception among British theatres. Marshall notes the unusually extensive influence which Knight exerted over scripts, and highlighted that, by the late sixties, ‘not one single gag’ was included in the productions – ‘a truly revolutionary change’ to traditional pantomime structure, and one which apparently further distinguished the Palladium from other theatres.<sup>102</sup> Similarly, the devising of original scores for pantomimes was not, according to Robbins, widely imitated elsewhere; ‘provincial audiences’, he argues, ‘preferred music they already knew’, so the usage of ‘popular standards’ in regional pantomimes largely persisted.<sup>103</sup> Robbins also highlighted that, although Steele’s *Cinderella* had been ‘beautiful[,] ... delightful ... and packed the vast theatre’, it did not prove especially memorable, and, after a further revival in 1960, ‘it vanished from the British scene’, thereby perhaps helping to prove the scriptwriter’s point about audiences preferring more conventional productions.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, Taylor has noted the increasing ‘influence’ of musical theatre on pantomime since the late twentieth century. As successful musicals have been produced in London’s West End, including at the Palladium itself, pantomimes throughout the country have increasingly borrowed from its conventions, in terms of plot development, choreography, and ‘integrat[ion]’ of songs.<sup>105</sup> The earlier pantomimes starring Richard and Steele helped to establish, and augment, this tendency. Always an aspiring stage-performer despite his ‘rock’ roots, Steele had fond memories of his participation in *Cinderella*, and had relished the ‘opportunity to sing show tunes’.<sup>106</sup> His involvement in this production undoubtedly attracted him further to musical theatre, enabling him to hone his stagecraft to such an extent that, by 1963, he was starring in

*Half a Sixpence*, a West End stage musical especially devised for him.<sup>107</sup> His first Palladium pantomime, *Dick Whittington*, also borrowed considerably from musical theatre (the score was not wholly original, but utilised London-themed numbers from shows such as *Oliver!* and *Half a Sixpence*, as well as the hit songs of the principals), and Steele himself believed that the two theatrical forms had a close relationship, containing many of the same key ‘ingredients’.<sup>108</sup> However, undoubtedly he had actively helped to forge such fusions through his formative pantomime appearances.

The practice of routinely incorporating chart-singers into pantomime reached its apex in the mid-1960s, as many popular ‘beat groups’ appeared in commercial productions during the early sixties. The Beatles themselves, as cultural trendsetters, did not appear in pantomime *per se*, although their early sixties Christmas Shows featured pantomime-style sketches alongside musical performances.<sup>109</sup> Like Steele and Richard, and, indeed, most of their fellow groups, the Beatles were no strangers to *Variety*, and appeared quite comfortable in this milieu, mingling with older show-business performers.<sup>110</sup> However, although their Christmas Shows were phenomenally popular, it was the decided opinion of many devotees that participation in such productions seemed to diminish the group. Like Freddie Carpenter, producer Peter Yolland had hoped, via these unique productions, to ‘chang[e] the concept of the pantomime’; however, for Barry Miles, the sketches were ‘inane’, while Andy Davis decried their ‘corny lines and silly costumes.’<sup>111</sup>

### ‘Your Career’s Behind You’: Pantomime and Hierarchies of Pop

The opinions expressed by Miles and Davis effectively foreshadowed the artistic hierarchies which emerged in the British music scene from the mid-1960s onwards. As groups like the Beatles became increasingly experimental and album-focused, and as they garnered the attention of a new generation of critics specialising in the dissection of rock music, divisions emerged between those musicians perceived as original creators evolving the medium of rock, and those who were, stylistically, more derivative and populist, and less inclined towards experimentation. This latter group was more often linked to ‘family entertainment’, rather than to the rebellious rock world. The nascent rock press could be scathing of

performers like these, viewing them as musically and culturally sterile; Cliff Richard was particularly targeted, his involvement in pantomime, alongside his appearances in family-orientated films and television programmes, contributing considerably to such detractions.<sup>112</sup> Many of the 1950s generation of popstars were either accused of ‘selling out’, betraying their initial youth-centric images, or else were dismissed as representatives of a primitive British pop scene which only improved once the Beatles and their peers were ‘smashing that old-fashioned showbiz template.’<sup>113</sup>

By the early 1970s, the practice of including emergent popstars in pantomimes had become less commonplace, partly owing to further theatre closures, but also as a result of changing trends, a more autonomous infrastructure for the pop business, and a greater range of performance-venues for musicians.<sup>114</sup> Thus, chart-topping groups such as Slade, Mud or T-Rex were not drafted into pantomimes as their counterparts of the previous decade had been. Les Gray of Mud told *Melody Maker* that his group was ‘thinking of putting on a pantomime.’ However, Gray emphasised that ‘it would have to be very obviously tongue in cheek stuff.’<sup>115</sup> Clearly, some of the routes deemed advisable ten years previously seemed curious or outdated by the seventies. Consequently, while popstars still made pantomime appearances in this period, they tended, increasingly, to be of a slightly older vintage – performers, such as Garrity or Black, who no longer wielded much influence over the contemporary pop world. Artistes such as Black or Steele had, by this time, comfortably settled into successful careers as entertainers, and both continued to make frequent pantomime appearances.<sup>116</sup> However, despite this, associations were already starting to be forged between pantomime involvement and an ailing career.<sup>117</sup> The impression of pantomime as a rather tawdry vehicle for show-business ‘has-beens’ – or, as one recent *NME* article suggested, in a quip derived from a well-known pantomime gag, those whose ‘career[s] were] behind [them]’, was already emerging during the 1970s.<sup>118</sup> Musicians, like Garrity, who had seemed unable to embrace the ‘art rock’ of their ambitious contemporaries were, as Faulk notes, ‘stymied’ and even ‘feminiz[ed]’, their appearances in ‘the obligatory Christmas pantos’ testifying to this. The Beatles, the Who or the Kinks, meanwhile, enjoying ‘a position of strength’ within the industry, had no need to consider such an apparently demeaning route.<sup>119</sup>

Nevertheless, this assessment fails to distinguish among performers, or to recognise that many ‘entertainers’ actively enjoyed pantomime. Admittedly, this was not uniformly the case; Cliff Richard, for instance, felt somewhat ambivalent about the impact of his pantomime performances on his musical career.<sup>120</sup> However, clearly artistes like Tommy Steele thrived in the medium; in fact, having begun his pantomime career as a novice outsider, he was eventually considered a master of modern pantomime performance. Variety veteran ‘Wee’ Georgie Wood believed that his rendition of *Dick Whittington* had been among the ‘finest’ within living memory.<sup>121</sup> Similarly, although less successful or publicly acclaimed than Steele, former popstars such as Garrity and Joe Brown became dedicated pantomime performers. Brown cultivated a deep affection for the ‘great traditional art’ of pantomime, and eventually became a veteran in his own right, estimating, in 2011, that he had appeared in some 25 productions over the years.<sup>122</sup> Perceptions of what pantomime participation signified, thus, depended on the outlook of the individuals in question. Popular musicians negotiated their positions within pantomime in various ways, and often in a manner which bore little relation to career-path or celebrity; the ‘inversion of social conventionality’ which the medium promoted arguably enabled such performers to take centre-stage, regardless of their contemporary status.<sup>123</sup> Straightforward assumptions about those who pursued this particular path can, at times, be excessively denigrating in their appraisals of the evolving cultural status both of the performers and of pantomime itself.

Furthermore, although clearly ‘declension narratives’ prevailed beyond the millennium, and despite fundamental changes to theatrical funding-models and production-styles, audiences continued to enjoy pantomime.<sup>124</sup> As Tina Bicât remarks, pantomime continues to provide ‘uncomplicated’ family-friendly enjoyment; ‘[people] know what to expect and they expect to have fun.’ Its very predictability and universality ensured its survival.<sup>125</sup> Similarly, its inimitably generous, eccentric character allowed it to remain a helpful prop for popular musicians throughout the decades, as it readily accommodated them without harsh judgement. In turn, popular music itself – whether in the shape of contemporary hit-songs or derivations of generic styles – has continued to enrich pantomime.<sup>126</sup>

Those who consider pantomime participation a viable means of hierarchizing pop performers in this period also presume that more artistically-inclined rock musicians would inevitably

have recoiled from direct involvement in this theatrical medium. Detractive appraisals of artists like Richard assumed a fundamental incompatibility between ‘music hall and pantomime’ and ‘serious’ rock music.<sup>127</sup> Again, such assumptions ignore many of the unexpected ways in which pantomime and pop remained constructively accessible to one another in the late sixties, despite musical evolutions and changes within the entertainment industry. For example, the experimental climate engendered by the late 1960s counter-culture was undoubtedly helpful to many within the arts, and the traditional ‘robust humour’ and subversive impudence of pantomime, despite its much-emphasised family dynamic, was recognised by would-be musical revolutionaries of the late sixties and early seventies.<sup>128</sup> Various rock bands utilised pantomime conventions almost as *quasi* counter-cultural ‘happenings’. Welsh progressive rock band Man devised the experimental pantomime-project *Almost Jack and the Beanstalk*, while the innovative Incredible String Band created a ‘marathon pantomime production’ containing elements of ‘mime, song and dance’.<sup>129</sup> The capacity for pantomime to be reconstructed as a ‘folk’ tradition was also suggested by the performances of Music Hall and pantomime standards by folk-group The Settlers during the festive 1972 BBC Radio programme *Pop into Panto!*<sup>130</sup>

Similarly, elements of pantomime were discernible amid the ‘Music Hall’ influences which scholars have observed in the music of the Who or the Kinks. Stratton notes the use of ‘call and response’ choruses, echoing those deployed by ‘music hall and pantomime entertainers’, which were used by the Kinks, while Gordon Thompson suggests that the quasi-theatrical narrative song ‘A Quick One’, performed by the Who in 1969, betrayed elements of ‘musical comedy, pantomime, and parody’.<sup>131</sup> Clearly, rock artists could be highly experimental as they explored such interests, and, as Stratton argues, such engagement with heritage would become a fundamental hallmark of the distinctively ‘English’/‘British’ sixties rock sound. Nevertheless, these explorations were not always rooted in self-conscious artistry. Thompson also perceives, in ‘Quick One’, ‘artistic pretension’ (a quality often attributed to sixties rock) and ‘juvenile jest’. This latter quality tends not to be stressed in accounts of performers like these, but clearly, at times, they recognised the appeal of indulging straightforwardly in the sort of knockabout ‘fun’ which pantomime promoted. The 1966 edition of the annual ‘Christmas Message’ which the Beatles delivered to fans was entitled ‘Pantomime (Everywhere it’s Christmas)’ – a mixture of panto-derived sketches and songs which blended festive goodwill (and ‘music hall’ influences) with markedly zany humour.<sup>132</sup> Although they

had never involved themselves wholly in pantomime, the Beatles remained inspired by the medium, using it, in this instance, to commune with their fans. Others seemed eager to participate more directly in pantomime. In 1968, Ray Davies announced that he wished the Kinks to stage a pantomime; the plan ‘did not come together’, but, as Thomas Kitts suggests, it reflected the traditional interests and ‘restless imagination’ of the songwriter.<sup>133</sup> The irascible Pete Townshend, similarly, was an unlikely pantomime aficionado, expressly extricating his band from such traditions by suggesting that ‘the Who [were] ... a pantomime – although not one you’d take your children to knowingly’.<sup>134</sup> Yet, in 1979, the guitarist assumed the demanding role of Widow Twankey in a private production of *Aladdin*; even he showed willingness to allow pantomime to transform and confound his public image.<sup>135</sup> Meanwhile, Elton John, perceived by Chris Welch as a performer straddling musical worlds, his prowess making him an ‘elitist’s delight’ while his chart-hits accorded him ‘teenybop’ idol status, harboured an unashamed love of pantomime. Cliff Richard, recalling the assistance which the singer gave him in promoting his singles during the early 1980s, declared that John had become an admirer of his after seeing his Palladium pantomimes.<sup>136</sup> John himself told Welch of his desire to perform in ‘a rock and roll pantomime’ at the Palladium, dismissing the inevitable suggestions that such a venture might ‘ruin [his] image.’<sup>137</sup> Although this particular dream remained unfulfilled, some eleven years later Elton John performed as an elaborately-costumed *Mother Goose* for a charity production at the Drury Lane Theatre.<sup>138</sup> The ability of pantomime to effect ‘transformations’, and to confound cultural assumptions, was evident yet again. When such performers engaged with the medium, it was not necessarily always from a high-minded artistic perspective. Pantomime, though part of the ‘Music-Hall’ world which inspired many of these rock musicians, also occupied a category of its own, and its inimitable methods of expressing community, alternative identities and straightforward enjoyment were recognised by performers like Davies and John. In this respect, they did not diverge as significantly from their peers in the ‘entertainer’ camp as critics had assumed. The perception of pantomime as a lynchpin around which to construct musical hierarchies during the late 1960s and beyond, thus, proves too simplistic. The ability of pantomime to embody so many apparently contradictory qualities – ‘childlike’ innocence and subversion, decline and survival, tradition and innovation – meant that any one-dimensional appraisal of its status during this period was bound to be both limited and erroneous.



## Conclusion

From the 1950s onwards, popular music and pantomime forged a relationship which was at once curious, eccentric and mutually enriching. Dorothy Ward accepted the changes which newcomers like Tommy Steele brought to pantomime, but she could scarcely have imagined the extent to which pantomime, and particularly her own swansong role of *Dick Whittington*, would come to transform Steele as a performer, allowing him to take his place alongside her as one of the most highly-acclaimed principal boys of the twentieth century. Clearly, for some critics, the fact that Steele embraced the glittery kingdom of pantomime meant that he had renounced all claims to rock credibility. Yet this trivialisation of pantomime fails to recognise the multi-faceted manner in which it has influenced and interacted with the popular music world throughout the late twentieth century. The fluidity of pantomime, and its ability to seem at once innovative and reassuringly familiar, meant that its relationship with the world of pop was as diverse and adaptive as it was enduring, and, ultimately, considerably more complex than the superficial, hierarchically-bound perceptions of critics have often assumed. Exploring the relationship between pop and panto uniquely illuminates aspects of the music scene, but also highlights various fundamental aspects of post-war British social history, including the true extent of the cultural ‘generation gap’, and the remarkable ability of theatrical traditions like pantomime, and Variety, to reinvent themselves amid pervasive decline. Against the odds, pantomime has survived beyond the millennium, always seeming reassuringly constant amid its ever-evolving ‘traditions’, while continuing to demonstrate its adaptive powers. Popular music has played a central, varied, enduring role in these rather paradoxical developments, and pop, in turn, has itself been influenced by pantomime in diverse and surprising ways. The relationship between the two cultural forms has served as a rich source of diversion for many people over the years – yet it is undoubtedly a relationship which deserves more serious attention from scholars of post-war British social and cultural history.

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## **Endnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> A photograph of Ward in this role appears at <http://www.its-behind-you.com/wardglenville.html> (accessed 4/12/15). 'Singin' the Blues' was a number one hit for Steele in 1956. See <http://www.45cat.com/artist/tommy-steele> (accessed 4/12/15).
- <sup>2</sup> Charles Lewsen, 'Critic's Choice', *Panto!* 3 (Christmas 1974), p.13-14.
- <sup>3</sup> Hugh Johnson, 'Prince of Boys', *Panto!* 4 (Christmas 1975), p.13-14.
- <sup>4</sup> 'First and Foremost a Principal Boy', *The Times* Monday 30 December 1957, p.10. Here, 'this sort of thing' mainly referred to the casting of males as 'principal boys'.
- <sup>5</sup> 'Variety' generally denotes the commercialised successor to the Victorian Music-Hall tradition. See Oliver Double, *Britain Had Talent: A History of Variety Theatre* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
- <sup>6</sup> Rock writer Pete Frame considers the first incursion of Lonnie Donegan into pantomime to be proof that he 'gone over to the other side'. *The Restless Generation: How Rock Music Changed the Face of 1950s Britain* (London: Rogan House, 2007), p.235.
- <sup>7</sup> See, for instance, Selina Todd and Hilary Young, 'Baby-Boomers to 'Beanstalkers': Making the Modern Teenager in Post-War Britain', *Cultural and Social History* 9/3 (2012): p.451-467, and my own 'Reassessing 'the Generation Gap': Bill Haley's 1957 Tour of Britain, Inter-Generational Relations and Attitudes to Rock 'n' Roll in the Late 1950s', *Twentieth Century British History* 24/4 (2013): p.573-605.
- <sup>8</sup> See Dominic Sandbrook's account of this trend in *Never Had It So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (London: Abacus, 2006), p.475-477.
- <sup>9</sup> Jon Garland, Keith Gildart, Anna Gough-Yates, Paul Hodgkinson, Bill Osgerby, Lucy Robinson, John Street, Pete Webb and Matthew Worley, 'Introduction: Youth Culture, Popular Music and the End of Consensus in Post-War Britain', *Contemporary British History* 26/3 (2012), p.265.
- <sup>10</sup> Double, *Britain Had Talent*, p.204-206.
- <sup>11</sup> Millie Taylor, *British Pantomime Performance* (Bristol: Intellect, 2007); Jeffrey Richards, *The Golden Age of Pantomime: Slapstick, Spectacle and Subversion in Victorian England* (London: IB Tauris, 2014); Jim Davis (ed), *Victorian Pantomime: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
- <sup>12</sup> See Simon Frith, 'Look! Hear! The Uneasy Relationship of Popular Music and Television', *Popular Music* 21/3 (October 2002), p.283.
- <sup>13</sup> Barry Faulk, *British Rock Modernism, 1967-1977* (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), p. 2; Jon Stratton, 'Englishing Popular Music in the 1960s', in Andy Bennett and Jon Stratton (eds), *Britpop and the English Music Tradition* (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), p.41-54.
- <sup>14</sup> See Double, *Britain Had Talent*, p.37-46.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p.11-20.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p.55-59.
- <sup>17</sup> Alistair Robinson, *Sunderland Empire: A History of the Theatre and its Stars* (Newcastle: TUPS Books, 2000), 83. See also *Ibid*, p.69-71.
- <sup>18</sup> Janet Thumim, *Inventing Television Culture: Men, Women and the Box* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004), p.6.
- <sup>19</sup> Double, *Britain Had Talent*, p.70; 'A Hundred Music Halls Closed Since the War: But Moss Empires Have New Policy', *Times* 28 January 1959, p.3.
- <sup>20</sup> See David Griffiths, 'Light Entertainment', *The Listener* Thursday 4 June 1964, p.935; Double, *Britain Had Talent*, p.85-88.
- <sup>21</sup> See Bob Dawbarn, 'The Man Behind Britain's Big Beat', *Melody Maker* 29 August 1959, p.3.
- <sup>22</sup> Quotes from Kenneth Allsop, 'Where, Oh Where, Has Elvis Gone?' *Daily Mail* Wednesday 24 July 1957, p.6.
- <sup>23</sup> I am grateful to Mr. David Reed of the British Music Hall Society Archive for making several digitised Variety posters available to me. Posters and programmes may also be viewed at the Scottish Theatre Archive (Glasgow University Special Collections), the Victoria & Albert Theatre and Performance Archive, and at <http://www.bradfordtimeline.co.uk/music.htm> (Accessed 4/12/16).

- <sup>24</sup> *Melody Maker* listed popstars in panto on 3 January 1959, p.9-10. The article ‘Pop Stars in Panto’, on the informative website <http://www.its-behind-you.com/popstars.html> (accessed 4/12/16), details the pantomime appearances of popular singers.
- <sup>25</sup> See Jeffrey Richards, ‘E.L. Blanchard and ‘The Golden Age of Pantomime’’, in Davis (ed), *Victorian Pantomime*, p.33.
- <sup>26</sup> Jack Waterman, ‘Who Says Pantomime is Dead?’ *The Listener* Thursday 21 December 1978, p 826; Richards, *Golden Age*, 358-359.
- <sup>27</sup> On Blanchard, see Richards, ‘E.L. Blanchard’; Gyles Brandreth, *Discovering Pantomime* (Aylesbury: Shire, 1973), p.9, p.14-15.
- <sup>28</sup> See Jim Davis, ‘Introduction: Victorian Pantomime’, in Davis (ed.), *Victorian Pantomime*, p. 6-7.
- <sup>29</sup> Waterman, ‘Who Says’ p. 827.
- <sup>30</sup> Brandreth, *Discovering Pantomime*, p.44-49; Caroline Radcliffe, ‘Dan Leno: Dame of Drury Lane’, in Davis (ed), *Victorian Pantomime*, p.118-134.
- <sup>31</sup> Brandreth, *Discovering Pantomime*, p.41-42.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 16; Davis, ‘Introduction’, p.13; Waterman, ‘Who Says’, p. 827.
- <sup>33</sup> Derek Salberg, *Once Upon a Pantomime* (Luton: Imprint of Luton Ltd, 1981), p.82-83.
- <sup>34</sup> Waterman, ‘Who Says’, p. 827.
- <sup>35</sup> Eric Morecambe, ‘Views’, *The Listener* Thursday 21 December 1972, p.849. Roger Wilmut, *Kindly Leave the Stage! The Story of Variety 1919-1960* (London: Methuen, 1985), p.186.
- <sup>36</sup> See Bruce Welch with Howard Elson, *Rock ‘n’ Roll I Gave You the Best Years of My Life: A Life in the Shadows* (London: Viking, 1989), p.13.
- <sup>37</sup> Mollie Ellis wrote in 1958 that singers like Whitfield and Jimmy Young were ‘playing their part in bringing the teenagers to the theatres’. See ‘Good Omens for Variety’ in *The Stage Year Book 1959* (London: Carson & Comerford, 1959), p.25.
- <sup>38</sup> Bruce Forsyth criticised younger popstars for these reasons. See *Bruce: The Autobiography of Bruce Forsyth* (London: Pan Books, 2001), p.110-111.
- <sup>39</sup> See Welch/Elson, *Rock ‘n’ Roll*, p.102-3, on disturbances during an appearance by Cliff Richard at the Chiswick Empire. See also Double, *Britain Had Talent*, p.83-86.
- <sup>40</sup> For example, see ‘George Lacy’ (interview with Anthony Everitt of the *Birmingham Post*), reprinted in *Panto! 3* (Christmas 1974), p.15.
- <sup>41</sup> W.A. Darlington, ‘Lavish Pantomime is Lacking Exuberance: Frankie Vaughan Unfunny in “Puss in Boots”’, *Daily Telegraph* 20 December 1962 – from Production File for *Puss in Boots*, London Palladium, 1962-3, V&A Theatre & Performance Department.
- <sup>42</sup> Norman Robbins, *Slapstick and Sausages: The Evolution of British Pantomime* (Tiverton: Trapdoor Publishing, 2002), p.210.
- <sup>43</sup> In *Dick Whittington*, Mary Hopkin, as Alice Fitzwarren, when urged by her companions to ‘sing ... something, to cheer [herself] up’, duly performed her first hit-song ‘Those Were The Days’. (Phil Park, *Dick Whittington* script, London Palladium, 1969-70, Bernard Delfont Limited Archive, THM/300/8/22, V&A Theatre & Performance Department, Scene 11 p. 53-54); *Humpty Dumpty*, starring Tommy Steele, finished with the singer in ‘front cloth’ position. After ensuring that ‘the audience ... enjoyed ... his adventures ...’ Steele ‘step[ped] out of character to become himself again’ and perform a musical set. (Prompt script, *Humpty Dumpty*, Liverpool 1961/62, Bernard Delfont Limited Archive, THM/300/8/34, V&A Theatre & Performance Department, Act II Scene 16).
- <sup>44</sup> *Babes in the Wood* features, in Act II Scene 8, a comic ‘balloon dance’ – ‘a completely extraneous comedy spot [in which] ... the performers are not identified with the characters they play in the story.’ (*Babes in the Wood* script, Palace Theatre Manchester, 1966-67, Bernard Delfont Limited Archive, THM/300/8/12, V&A Theatre & Performance Department, p.45).
- <sup>45</sup> ‘The Christmas Shows of 1959’, *The Stage and Television Today* 7 January 1960, p.9.
- <sup>46</sup> Brandreth, *Discovering Pantomime*, p.52.
- <sup>47</sup> ‘In Defence of Pantomime’, *The Times* Monday 16 December 1963, p.13. Fletcher also objected to the increasing use of overtly crude humour in pantomimes. On inconsequential ‘hit-song’ performances in pantomimes, see ‘Three Pantomimes Worth Going to See’, *The Times* Wednesday 28 December 1960, p.11.

- <sup>48</sup> Gerald Frow, *'Oh Yes It Is': A History of Pantomime* (London: BBC, 1985), p.182-183. See also Leonora Q. Tothill, 'Lament for Principal Boys', *Guardian* 21 December 1960, p.6; and Henry Marshall, 'Author! Author!, *Panto!* 2 (Christmas 1973), p.13.
- <sup>49</sup> See Felix Barker, 'A 'Puss' Too Full of Song', *Evening News* n.d. (from *Puss in Boots* production file, V&A Theatre & Performance Department); 'Three Pantomimes'.
- <sup>50</sup> 'Panto from Scratch: Robots, Magic and Melodrama', *The Times* 20 December 1962 (from *Puss in Boots* Production File, V&A Theatre & Performance Department).
- <sup>51</sup> Robbins, *Slapstick*, p.210.
- <sup>52</sup> Donegan bio in programme for *Cinderella*, Theatre Royal, Nottingham, 22 December 1960 – 14 January 1961 (Production File, V&A Theatre & Performance Department).
- <sup>53</sup> *Cinderella*, Royalty Theatre, Chester – Review in *The Stage and Television Today*, 9 January 1964, p.14.
- <sup>54</sup> Act 2 Scene 14 of *Aladdin* features Twankey and Wishee participating in 'custard biz' and 'sausage gag', and culminates in various missiles being thrown around the theatre. David Croft and Phil Park (original book), *Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp*, Manchester 1965-66, Bernard Delfont Limited Archive, THM/300/8/9, V&A Theatre & Performance Department. 'Slosh/gunge' is explained in 'S is for Slosh, or Gunge' in Chris Harris, *Alphabet of Pantomime, or, There Be Nothing Like a Dame* (Bristol: Splinters, 2000), np.
- <sup>55</sup> Adam Faith, *Acts of Faith* (London: Bantam, 1996), p.114-115.
- <sup>56</sup> 'Three Pantomimes'.
- <sup>57</sup> Review of Gerry and the Pacemakers in 'Babes in the Wood', *The Stage and Television Today*, 2 January 1964, p.32.
- <sup>58</sup> R.B. Marriott, 'Sixty Years in Show Business', *The Stage and Television Today*, 7 July 1966, 8.
- <sup>59</sup> 'Floreat Pantomime Says Arthur Askey', article in Magazine Programme for *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, 5 April 1966, p.5, 7. (Manchester Palace Theatre Programmes 1965-67 TH 792 094273 MA 79, Manchester City Archives).
- <sup>60</sup> Des O'Connor, *Bananas Can't Fly!: The Autobiography* (London: Headline, 2001), p. 92; Cliff Richard/Penny Junor, *My Life, My Way* (London: Headline, 2008), p. 33-34.
- <sup>61</sup> Billy Cotton, *I Did It My Way: His Life Story* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1970), p.184-185.
- <sup>62</sup> *Ed Doolan Interviews Joe Brown*, 01:00 25/09/2011, BBC Radio 4 Extra, 60 mins. <https://learningonscreen.ac.uk/ondemand/index.php/prog/013C6FBC> (Accessed 5/12/16), 37:23-37:37.
- <sup>63</sup> Welch/Elson, *Rock 'n' Roll*, p. 173; Kevin St. John, *Cliff Richard in his Own Words* (London: Omnibus Press, 1991), p.92-93.
- <sup>64</sup> Forsyth incorporated impersonations of chart-singers into his stage-act. Cotton frequently spoofed popular trends, such as skiffle, on his shows (see Chas McDevitt, *Skiffle: The Definitive Inside Story* (London: Robson Books Ltd., 1997), p.139; Baker also experimented with the comic potential of pop, as evidenced by her performance on *Val Parnell's Saturday Spectacular*, ATV, 25 May 1957 (Script in Hylde Baker Papers, Lancashire Archives, DDX 1683/2/2/2), p.21-23.
- <sup>65</sup> Taylor, *British Pantomime Performance*, p.138-139.
- <sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, p.140-141.
- <sup>67</sup> Millie Taylor, 'Continuity and Transformation in Twentieth-century Pantomime', in Davis (ed.), *Victorian Pantomime*, p.197.
- <sup>68</sup> David Climie, *Puss in Boots: The 'Tale' of a Real Cool Cat* draft script (CLI FOLIO 38041810005504, V&A Theatre & Performance Department), p.38, 57-58, 64-65.
- <sup>69</sup> Croft and Park, *Aladdin* Act I, Scene 6.
- <sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, Act I Scene I. The rendition featured a 'snap key change' for additional amusement.
- <sup>71</sup> Roy Hudd/Philip Hinden, *Roy Hudd's Cavalcade of Variety Acts* (London: Robson Books, 1997), p.87. The production in question was probably *Babes in the Wood*, (London Palladium, 1965).
- <sup>72</sup> Climie, *Puss in Boots*, p.38.
- <sup>73</sup> Jean Fergusson, *She Knows You Know! The Remarkable Story of Hylde Baker* (Derby: Breedon Books, 1997), p.116. A script and programme for this pantomime, in which Baker and Cooper starred as Widow Twankey and Abanazar respectively, are in the Lancashire Archives (DDX 1683/4/9; DDX 1683/2/4/6).

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- <sup>74</sup> Such traditions became longstanding; Taylor observes the ‘incongruity’ of the ‘grotesque’ dame performing songs by the Spice Girls or Madonna. *British Pantomime Performance*, p.141.
- <sup>75</sup> Marshall, ‘Author!’, p.12-13.
- <sup>76</sup> Norman Robbins, *Aladdin: A Pantomime* (London: Samuel French, 1985), p.25-26.
- <sup>77</sup> See Chris Abbott, *Putting on Panto to Pay for the Pinter: Henry Marshall Pantomimes at Salisbury Playhouse, 1955 to 1985* (Salisbury: Hobnob Press, 2012).
- <sup>78</sup> ‘Pantomime Dying? What Nonsense!’ *The Stage and Television Today*, 24 December 1963, p.1.
- <sup>79</sup> The pantomime is described in ‘Exchange Service’, *Panto! 1* (Christmas 1972), p.20-22. The names appear to refer to the 1960s group Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Tich.
- <sup>80</sup> Taylor, *British Pantomime Performance*, p.166.
- <sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, p.167.
- <sup>82</sup> On *A Wish for Jamie* and its sequels, see Vivien Devlin (ed), *Kings, Queens and People’s Palaces: An Oral History of the Scottish Variety Theatre, 1920-1970* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1991), p.131-134.
- <sup>83</sup> Robbins, *Slapstick*, p.206.
- <sup>84</sup> Freddie Carpenter/Eric Johns, ‘Why Should Pantomime Stand Still?’ *The Stage and Television Today* 31 January 1963, p.8.
- <sup>85</sup> See Scripts of Rogers and Hammerstein’s *Cinderella*, produced by Harold Fielding, THM 429/1/3 and THM 429/1/4, V&A Theatre & Performance.
- <sup>86</sup> *Ibid* (both jokes appear in THM/429/1/4). The ‘hand-jive’ was associated with the 2 I’s coffee bar in Soho, a former performance-venue for Steele.
- <sup>87</sup> Michael Grade recalls the Palladium pantomimes, many of which were produced by his father, Leslie Grade, in Michael Grade’s History of the Pantomime Dame, 00:35 13/02/2017, BBC4, 60 mins. <https://learningonscreen.ac.uk/ondemand/index.php/prog/02E298E0> (Accessed 7/5/17), 46.30-48.03
- <sup>88</sup> For programmes, see Production File for *Aladdin*, London Palladium, 1964-65, and Production File for *Cinderella*, London Palladium, 1966-67, V&A Theatre & Performance Department.
- <sup>89</sup> Clip from *Michael Grade’s History of the Pantomime Dame*, 47.35-47.49.
- <sup>90</sup> *Ibid*. The productions became ‘very, very expensive’, and the last Palladium pantomime was staged in 1986 (47.50-52.43). The prologue to *Cinderella* featured a filmed introduction ‘pan[ning]’ across clouds and trees before the stage-bound action begins (Bernard Delfont Limited Archive, THM/300/8/17, V&A Theatre & Performance Department) and *Aladdin* (1970-71) featured a filmed insert of the hero ‘flying ... on a magic carpet’, and a special-effect sequence showing the destruction of the palace. (Bernard Delfont Limited Archive, THM/300/8/8, V&A Theatre & Performance Department, p.70, 72).
- <sup>91</sup> Cliff Richard and the Shadows, *Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp* (LP, Columbia Records, 1964).
- <sup>92</sup> Peter Lewis, ‘Shadows Make Aladdin a Bright Success’, *Daily Mail*, 23 December 1964 (V&A production file).
- <sup>93</sup> Songs from the production, including the charting single ‘In the Country’, feature at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).
- <sup>94</sup> Philip Hope-Wallace, ‘Cinderella at the Palladium’, *Guardian* 21 December 1966 (V&A production file).
- <sup>95</sup> Ronald Hayman, Review of *Cinderella* in ‘Theatre’, *Queen*, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1967, p.12.
- <sup>96</sup> Programme for *Aladdin* (V&A production file).
- <sup>97</sup> Patrick Pilton recalled an incident during a *Cinderella* performance in which a young girl, moved by the plight of the lovelorn Buttons, rushed towards the stage crying ‘I’ll marry you, Cliff!’. *Every Night at the London Palladium* (London: Robson, 1976), 142.
- <sup>98</sup> The year-round ability to attract teenagers was noted by Malcolm Rutherford, ‘Every Night at the Palladium’, *Spectator*, 15 October 1964, p.13.
- <sup>99</sup> Peter Noble, ‘The World’s Most Famous Theatre’, *Cinderella* programme p.21-22 (From V&A production file).
- <sup>100</sup> Hilton Tims, ‘Aladdin’s Lamp Brings a Fortune’, *Daily Mail* 15 December 1964 (From V&A production file).



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- <sup>101</sup> Henry Marshall wrote ‘extra scenes’ for David Croft’s 1965 *Babes in the Wood* script, to accommodate different specialities, and the production subsequently ‘travelled around the number one houses’ for several years. Abbott, *Putting on Panto*, p.10-11.
- <sup>102</sup> Marshall, ‘Author!’, p.14.
- <sup>103</sup> See Robbins, *Slapstick*, p.207.
- <sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, p.206. Documentation relating to the Glasgow Empire production of *Cinderella* is held in Costume File for Harold Fielding’s 1960 Production of ‘Cinderella’, THM/429/2/1 (Box 2, file 1, V&A Theatre & Performance Department).
- <sup>105</sup> Taylor, *British Pantomime Performance*, p.167-168.
- <sup>106</sup> Tommy Steele, *Bermondsey Boy* (London: Penguin, 2006), p.295.
- <sup>107</sup> Adrian Wright, *A Tanner’s Worth of Tunes: Rediscovering the Post-War British Musical* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2010), p.169-171, p.260.
- <sup>108</sup> Songs included ‘Who Will Buy?’ from *Oliver!*, Harry Champion’s ‘What a Mouth’, and ‘Flash Bang Wallop (What a Picture)’ from *Half a Sixpence*. (Park, *Dick Whittington*). Quote from *Tommy Steele: Bermondsey Boy*, 22:00 26/12/2011, BBC Radio 2, 60 mins. <https://learningonscreen.ac.uk/ondemand/index.php/prog/022968D6> (Accessed 7/5/17), 30.16-30.29.
- <sup>109</sup> On the Christmas shows, see Andy Davis, *The Beatles Files* (Godalming: Bramley Books, 1998), p.29.
- <sup>110</sup> Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London: Abacus, 2006), p.219.
- <sup>111</sup> Barry Miles, Foreword, in Davis, *Beatles Files*, p.6, 29.
- <sup>112</sup> See Jon Wilde, ‘The World According to Cliff’, *Blitz* September 1987 <https://www.rocksbackpages.com/Library/Article/the-world-according-to-cliff> (Accessed 7/5/17).
- <sup>113</sup> Patrick Humphries, *Lonnie Donegan and the Birth of British Rock ‘n’ Roll* (London: Robson Press, 2012), p.209.
- <sup>114</sup> Johnny Rogan’s *Starmakers and Svengalis: The History of British Pop Management* (London: Queen Anne Press, 1988) explores changes in pop management styles.
- <sup>115</sup> Allan Jones, ‘The Old Days Are Coming Back!’ *Melody Maker* 10 August 1974, p.3.
- <sup>116</sup> Black’s contribution to pantomime was deemed sufficiently significant to merit a ‘spotlight’ article on <http://www.its-behind-you.com/> (Accessed 17/11/15).
- <sup>117</sup> Dan Glaister, ‘Old and New Stars Flourish on Panto Scene’, *Guardian* 27 December 1996, p.10.
- <sup>118</sup> See Mark Beaumont, ‘Your Career’s Behind You! The Pop Stars Treading the Panto Boards This Season’, *NME* 5 November 2015. <http://www.nme.com/blogs/nme-blogs/your-careers-behind-you-the-pop-stars-treading-the-panto-boards-this-season> (Accessed 25/6/16).
- <sup>119</sup> Faulk, *British Rock Modernism*, p.23, 34.
- <sup>120</sup> See Bill Latham/Cliff Richard, *Which One’s Cliff?* (Bath: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), p.224.
- <sup>121</sup> Brandreth, *Discovering Pantomime*, p.49.
- <sup>122</sup> *Ed Doolan Interviews*, 38.14-40.20
- <sup>123</sup> Radcliffe, ‘Dan Leno’, p.118.
- <sup>124</sup> Taylor explains these changes in ‘Continuity’, p.185-193.
- <sup>125</sup> Tina Bicat with Ruth Staines and Colin Winslow, *Pantomime: A Practical Guide* (Ramsbury: Crowood Press, 2004), 9.
- <sup>126</sup> Taylor, *British Pantomime Performance*, 162.
- <sup>127</sup> Steve Turner, ‘Cliff Richard’, *The History of Rock*, 1983. <http://www.rocksbackpages.com/Library/Article/cliff-richard> (Accessed 11/12/15)
- <sup>128</sup> Quote from Bicat, *Pantomime*, p. 9.
- <sup>129</sup> See ‘Man’s Christmas Panto!’ *Melody Maker* 15 December 1973, p.4; Jeremy Gilbert, ‘In Search of the Incredibles’, *Melody Maker* 28 March 1970, p.13.
- <sup>130</sup> *Pop into Panto!* (TX BBC Radio 2 26/12/72, script in BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham, Tape TLN 49/KJ769). Featured songs included ‘Tararaboomdiay’ and ‘Hot Codlins’.
- <sup>131</sup> Stratton, ‘Englishing Popular Music’, p.50; Gordon Thompson, *Please Please Me: Sixties British Pop, Inside Out* (Oxford UP, 2008), p.231.
- <sup>132</sup> Walter Everett, *The Beatles as Musicians: Revolver Through the Anthology* (NY; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), p.74.

<sup>133</sup> Thomas M. Kitts, *Ray Davies: Not Like Everybody Else* (New York; London: Routledge, 2008), p.114.

<sup>134</sup> Ray Connolly, *Stardust Memories: Talking About My Generation* (London: Pavilion/Michael Joseph, 1983), p.28-9.

<sup>135</sup> Reference to the performance appears at <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2006/oct/06/obituaries.mainsection> (Accessed 17/10/16).

<sup>136</sup> Richard/Latham, *Which One's Cliff?*, p.221-222.

<sup>137</sup> Chris Welch, 'Elton John Steps into Christmas', *Melody Maker* 24 November 1973, p.16-17.

<sup>138</sup> A photograph of this performance appears in Peter Lathan, *It's Behind You! The Story of Panto* (London: New Holland, 2004).

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