



Going to the Palais: A Social And Cultural History of Dancing and Dance Halls in Britain, 1918-1960

James Nott

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From the mid-1920s, the dance hall occupied a pivotal place in the culture of working- and lower-middle-class communities in Britain - a place rivalled only by the cinema and eventually to eclipse even that institution in popularity. *Going to the Palais* examines the history of this vital social and cultural institution, exploring the dances, dancers, and dance venues that were at the heart of one of twentieth-century Britain's most significant leisure activities.

Going to the Palais has several key focuses. First, it explores the expansion of the dance hall industry and the development of a 'mass audience' for dancing between 1918 and 1960. Second, the impact of these changes on individuals and communities is examined, with a particular concentration on working and lower-middle-class communities, and on young men and women. Third, the cultural impact of dancing and dance halls is explored. A key aspect of this debate is an examination of how Britain's dance culture held up against various standardizing processes (commercialization, Americanization, etc.) over the period, and whether we can see the emergence of a 'national' dance culture. Finally, the volume offers an assessment of wider reactions to dance halls and dancing in the period. *Going to the Palais* is concerned with the complex relationship between discourses of class, culture, gender, and national identity and how they overlap - how cultural change, itself a response to broader political, social, and economic developments, was helping to change notions of class, gender, and national identity.

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