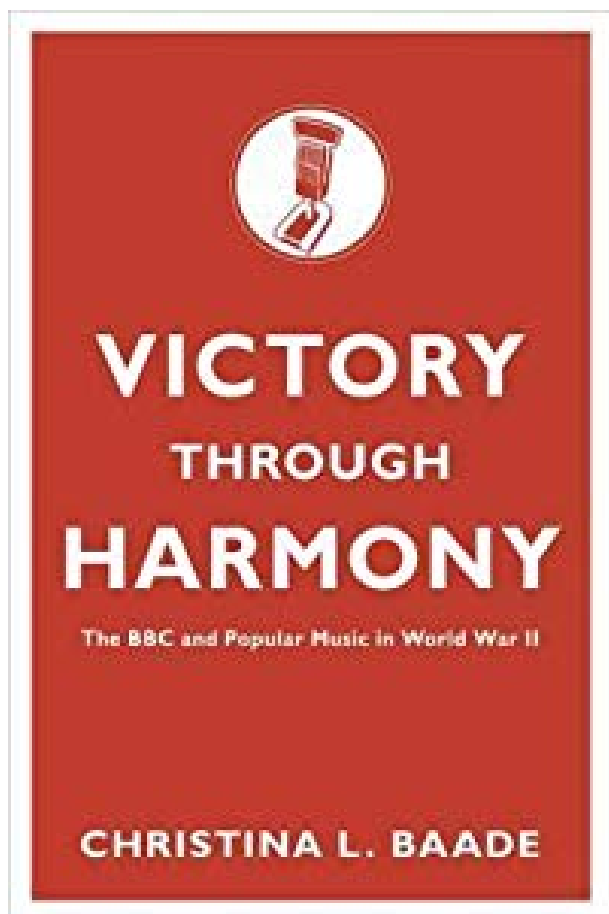


# Victory Through Harmony: The BBC and Popular Music in World War II



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To serve the British nation in World War II, the BBC charged itself with mobilizing popular music in support of Britain's war effort. Radio music, British broadcasters and administrators argued, could maintain civilian and military morale, increase industrial production, and even promote a sense of Anglo-American cooperation. Because of their widespread popularity, dance music and popular song were seen as ideal for these tasks; along with jazz, with its American associations and small but youthful audience, these genres suddenly gained new legitimacy at the traditionally more conservative BBC. In *Victory through Harmony*, author Christina Baade both tells the fascinating story of the BBC's musical participation in wartime events and explores how popular music and jazz broadcasting helped redefine notions of war, gender, race, class, and nationality in wartime Britain. Baade looks in particular at the BBC's pioneering Listener Research Department, which tracked the tastes of select demographic groups including servicemen stationed overseas and young female factory workers in order to further the goal of entertaining, cheering, and even calming the public during wartime. The book also tells how the wartime BBC programmed popular music to an unprecedented degree with the goal of building national unity and morale, promoting new roles for women, virile representations of masculinity, Anglo-American friendship, and pride in a common British culture. In the process, though, the BBC came into uneasy contact with threats of Americanization, sentimentality, and the creativity of non-white

"others," which prompted it to regulate and even censor popular music and performers. Rather than provide the soundtrack for a unified "People's War," Baade argues, the BBC's broadcasting efforts exposed the divergent ideologies, tastes, and perspectives of the nation. This illuminating book will interest all readers in popular music, jazz, and radio, as well as British cultural history and gender studies.