

For Immediate Release November 2019

Great Life Press, history writer J. Dennis Robinson, and  
The Music Hall present a new book:

# MUSIC HALL

How a City Built a Theater and a Theater Shaped a City

by J. Dennis Robinson

This fully researched, color illustrated history traces the cultural development of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, from the arrival of its first settlers. The Music Hall was built in 1878 and expanded by “ale tycoon” Frank Jones in 1901. Within these brick walls generations have watched America evolve from minstrel shows to musicals and Hollywood blockbusters, from animal acts to symphony orchestras, and from vaudeville to TEDx talks. Shuttered and decaying during World War II, New Hampshire’s vintage venue went on the auction block in 1945. It served as a movie house for the next four decades. Saved from demolition by a grassroots team of volunteers in the 1980s and gradually restored to its Victorian splendor, it has been pivotal in revitalizing the city’s downtown. Signature programs like the “Telluride by the Sea Film Festival” and “Writers on a New England Stage” put this historic theater on the national map. A must-read for anyone who cherishes the performing arts.

“I’m so glad they saved the hall. For me, this is one of the greatest places I could play, and I’ve played all the great halls.” — *Jazz Legend Dave Brubeck after a sold-out Music Hall performance.*

“Loving history as I do, it is a special pleasure to be speaking in a place that has such a treasured past.” — *Author Doris Kearns Goodwin during her appearance for “Writers on a New England Stage.”*

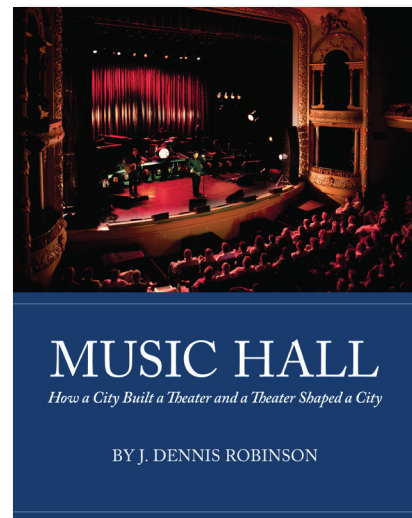


## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

J. Dennis Robinson is a popular columnist, lecturer, and public historian. He is the author of a dozen narrative history books on topics ranging from Jesse James, Lord Baltimore, and child labor exploitation to Wentworth by the Sea Hotel, Strawberry Banke Museum, Privateer Lynx, archaeology at the Isles of Shoals, and the infamous 1873 Smuttynose Island ax murders.

Robinson provides many informative and captivating lectures on Seacoast NH history. He lives in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, just across the swirling Piscataqua River from Maine.

J. Dennis Robinson is available for lectures and book signings. To contact him, please email [dennis@myseacoastnh.com](mailto:dennis@myseacoastnh.com)



Categories: BISAC HIS036100 /  
HISTORY / United States / State &  
Local / New England

BISAC PER000000 / Performing Arts /  
General

ISBN: 9781938394348

Pub Date: November 20, 2019

Retail Price: \$35.00

Pages: 256, with 290 color illustrations

Trim size: 8x10.75

Binding: hardcover

### Publisher:

Great Life Press

191 Parsons Rd., Rye NH 03870

Phone: 603-431-8873

email: [books@greatlifepress.com](mailto:books@greatlifepress.com)

Web: [greatlifepress.com](http://greatlifepress.com)

### Distributed by:

Pathway Book Service

34 Production Ave, Keene, NH 03431

1-800-345-6665 • Fax: 603-965-2181

Email: [pbs@pathwaybook.com](mailto:pbs@pathwaybook.com)

Web: [pathwaybook.com](http://pathwaybook.com)

### Author Contact:

J. Dennis Robinson

Website: [jdennisrobinson.com](http://jdennisrobinson.com)

Email: [dennis@myseacoastnh.com](mailto:dennis@myseacoastnh.com)

Phone: 603-427-2020