



# **The New Humor in the Progressive Era: Americanization and the Vaudeville Comedian (Palgrave Studies in Theatre and Performance History)**

*Rick DesRochers*

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Between 1881 and 1928, comic vaudevillians used the new humor to push and redefine the boundaries of class, ethnicity, and gender in the defiance of Progressive era efforts at Americanization. Using satire, broad physical behavior, and mocking the propriety of the middle class, the new humor of vaudeville comedy was intentionally disruptive to Anglo-American values. By tracing the effects of unprecedented immigration, the advent of the new woman, and the little-known vaudeville careers of performers like the Elinore Sisters, Buster Keaton, the Marx Brothers, and Marie Dressler, DesRochers examines the relationship between comedic vaudeville acts and progressive reformers as they fought over the new definition of "Americanness."

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