



Charles Ludlam and the Ridiculous Theatrical Company: Critical Analyses of 29 Plays

Rick Roemer

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In the late 1960s, Charles Ludlam (1943-1987) brought his unique brand of theatre to New York audiences. Based in part on traditional comic characters, his "ridiculous" school included such inspirations as Hollywood B movies, camp, drag, and opera. His shows were also a study in self-collaboration; Ludlam acted as playwright, director, designer, and actor in his own Off Broadway theatre--the Ridiculous Theatrical Company. Critically, Ludlam's works were often overlooked or misunderstood, and since his death *The Mystery of Irma Vep* is the only one of his 29 plays consistently performed in regional theatres. This work provides an overview of Ludlam's life, explores the theatrical underpinnings of his work and goes on to cover the entire Ludlam canon. The book includes examinations of such plays as *Le Bourgeois Avant-Garde*, *Bluebeard*, *Galas* and *Stage Blood*. It concludes with a look at Ludlam's work in the 1980s when he focused on presenting new plays, many of them original farces.

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