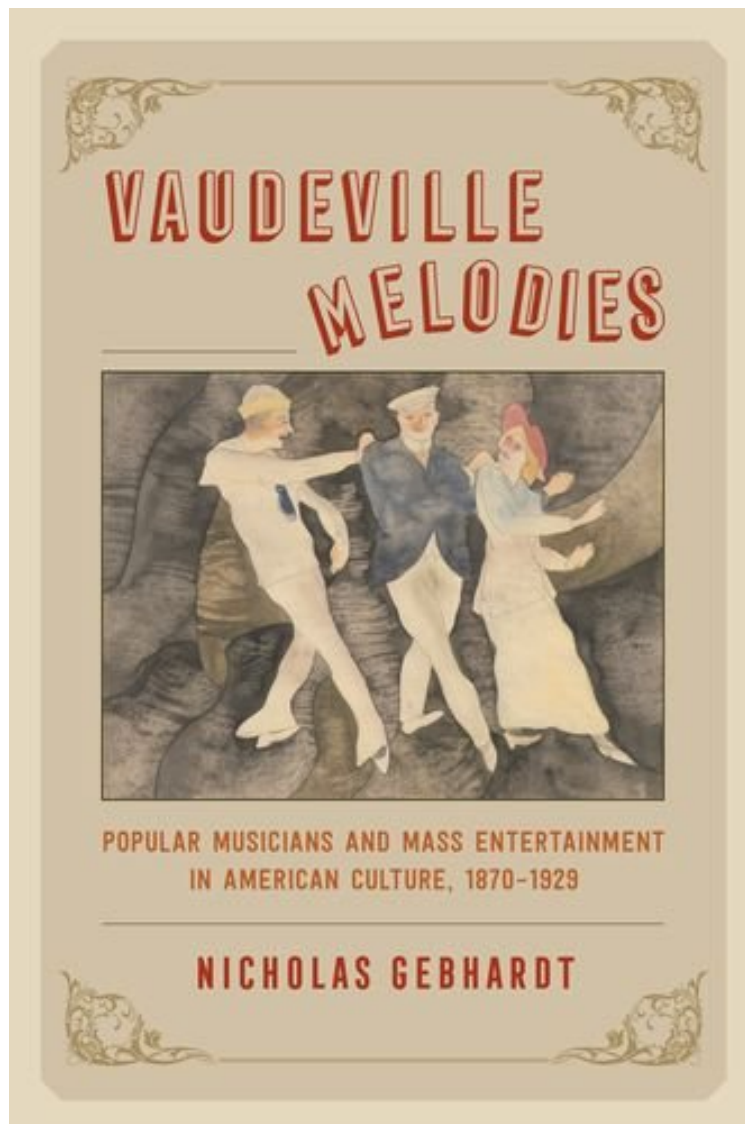


[Mobile book] Vaudeville Melodies: Popular Musicians and Mass Entertainment in American Culture, 1870-1929

Vaudeville Melodies: Popular Musicians and Mass Entertainment in American Culture, 1870-1929

Nicholas Gebhardt

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If you enjoy popular music and culture today, you have vaudeville to thank. From the 1870s until the 1920s, vaudeville was the dominant context for popular entertainment in the United States, laying the groundwork for the music industry we know today. In *Vaudeville Melodies*, Nicholas Gebhardt introduces us to the performers, managers, and audiences who turned disjointed variety show acts into a phenomenally successful business. First introduced in the late nineteenth century, by 1915 vaudeville was being performed across the globe, incorporating thousands of performers from every branch of show business. Its astronomical success relied on a huge network of theatres, each part of a circuit and administered from centralized booking offices. Gebhardt shows us how vaudeville transformed relationships among performers, managers, and audiences, and argues that these changes affected popular music culture in ways we are still seeing today. Drawing on firsthand accounts, Gebhardt explores the practices by which vaudeville performers came to understand what it meant to entertain an audience, the conditions in which they worked, the institutions they relied upon, and the values they imagined were essential to their success.

In this lively and immensely readable book, Gebhardt makes a convincing case that vaudeville was responsible for instituting a set of practices and conventions that affected all areas of popular performance.