



The Immigrant Scene: Ethnic Amusements in New York, 1880–1920

Sabine Haenni

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Yiddish melodramas about the tribulations of immigration. German plays about alpine tourism. Italian vaudeville performances. Rubbernecking tours of Chinatown. In the New York City of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these seemingly disparate leisure activities played similar roles: mediating the vast cultural, demographic, and social changes that were sweeping the nation's largest city.

In *The Immigrant Scene*, Sabine Haenni reveals how theaters in New York created ethnic entertainment that shaped the culture of the United States in the early twentieth century. Considering the relationship between leisure and mass culture, *The Immigrant Scene* develops a new picture of the metropolis in which the movement of people, objects, and images on-screen and in the street helped residents negotiate the complexities of modern times.

In analyzing how communities engaged with immigrant theaters and the nascent film culture in New York City, Haenni traces the ways in which performance and cinema provided virtual mobility—ways of navigating the socially complex metropolis—and influenced national ideas of immigration, culture, and diversity in surprising and lasting ways.

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