



Ridiculous!: The Theatrical Life and Times of Charles Ludlam

David Kaufman

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From his first unscripted appearance on an Off-Broadway stage in the revolutionary 1960s to the frontpage news of his death from AIDS in 1987 at age 44, Charles Ludlam embodied - and helped to engender - the upheavals of his time. The astonishing life and legacy of this force to be reckoned with are at last revealed in **RIDICULOUS!**, a literary biography of an American comic genius. After founding the Ridiculous Theatrical Company in 1967, Ludlam sustained an ever-shifting troupe of bohemian players through two decades of perennially daunting circumstances by writing 29 plays - plays that he starred in and directed as well. While Ludlam's work has become increasingly popular at regional theatres, on college campuses, and on stages throughout the world, his gender-bending theories and wide-ranging cultural impact have reached far beyond Bette Midler, the original cast members of Saturday Night Live and the countless other artists he influenced during his abbreviated lifetime. Like his early plays, Ludlam's life was rife with the sex, drugs and creative experimentation that characterized the freewheeling '60s and '70s. Based on a decade of research and interviews with more than 150 people who knew or worked with Ludlam - including all of the major players in his troupe and seven of his lovers - **RIDICULOUS!** recreates the dramatic life of an inimitable and subversive theatrical master with you-are-there intensity. Winner of the LAMBDA Literary Award for Biography and the Theatre Library Association Award for Outstanding Theatre Book of the Year "David Kaufman makes a persuasive case for Ludlam's being a genius ... As a record of Ludlam's life and the theatrical world in which he was both guru and grandmaster, this book is informed and passionate." - Mel Gussow, The New York Times "A fascinating portrait of an authentic stage genius and the New York avant-garde scene in which he toiled with such demented and dedicated diligence." - Playbill "The phenom who inspired everyone from Bette Midler and Madeline Kahn to Tony Kushner and Paul Rudnick was no box of chocolates - which, as reading experiences go, makes his story all the sweeter." - Vanity Fair "This is one helluva piece of work." - Marilyn Stasio, Variety.com

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