



# The Hanlon Brothers: From Daredevil Acrobatics to Spectacle Pantomime, 1833-1931 (Theater in the Americas)

*Mark Cosdon*

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The Hanlons—a family of six brothers from Manchester, England—were one of the world's premiere performing troupes in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, yet their legacy has been mostly forgotten. In *The Hanlon Brothers: From Daredevil Acrobatics to Spectacle Pantomime, 1833–1931*, Mark Cosdon carefully documents the careers of this talented family and enumerates their many contributions to modern popular entertainment.

As young men, the Hanlons stunned audiences all over the world with their daring acrobatic feats. After a tragic accident severely injured one brother (and indirectly led to his suicide in a manner achievable only by someone with considerable acrobatic talents), they moved into the safer arena of spectacle pantomime, where they became the rage of Parisian popular theatre. They achieved fame with their uproariously funny and technically astonishing production of *Le Voyage en Suisse*. After settling permanently in the northeastern United States, they developed two more full-length pantomimes, *Fantasma* and *Superba*. The three shows toured for more than thirty years, a testament to their popularity and to the Hanlons' impressive business acumen.

The book's illustrations—including sketches of their performances, studio photographs of the Hanlons, and posters for all three of their major pantomimes—are essential to the understanding of their work. *The Hanlon Brothers* is painstakingly researched yet accessible and engaging. Cosdon has managed to provide a thorough and engrossing account of the Hanlons' lives and careers, which will no doubt help to reestablish their legacy in the world of popular entertainment.

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