

## CHARLIE CHAPLIN (1889 - 1977)

### Silent Movies' Legend

Film actor, producer, screenwriter, director, and composer, born in London, UK. The son of music-hall entertainers, his mother had a nervous breakdown and his father died when he was five, forcing Charlie to become a street urchin, along with his half-brother, Sydney, dancing for pennies in the street. After a time in an orphanage, he joined a troupe of child dancers and later had small roles on the London stage. At age 17 he joined a troupe of players touring the USA, where in 1912 he joined the Keystone company to appear in his first silent film, *Making a Living* (1914). He made 35 films in one year at Keystone, many of which he also wrote and directed, meanwhile developing his character of 'The Little Tramp'. Despite the appearance of spontaneity and improvisation in his films, he worked out every last detail to perfection. In 1915 he joined Essanay, making his first masterpiece, *The Tramp* that year, and was a co-founder of United Artists (1919). *The Kid* (1921) made him an international star, and he went on to make his major works, *City Lights* (1928), *Modern Times* (1936), *The Great Dictator* (1940), and *Limelight* (1952), after which his popularity waned.

Over the years he was criticized for his many romantic affairs, often with younger women. He never applied for US citizenship and, in 1952, on a ship to England, he was informed that he might not be permitted back into the States because of his alleged leftist views, so he settled in Switzerland with his wife **Oona**, daughter of Eugene O'Neill, with whom he had eight children. He said he was happiest there, far away from the fame and misfortune. After three disastrous marriages, a succession of love affairs and the FBI's accusations that weren't true, Chaplin felt happy for the first time in a long time.

In 1972, Chaplin was honored at the Academy Awards as a wonderful comedian, actor and loving person. It was his first time back to America since the Red Scare accusations about him, and once again the huge crowd of people and fellow actors, producers and directors loved him, and he felt the love that he had always had of laughter and attention.

In 1977, on Dec. 25, Chaplin passed away of natural causes in his home in Switzerland. He was 88 years old. He was married to Oona Chaplin at the time, who was his wife for 36 years.

Even among false accusations and the troubled loves and marriages he went through, Charlie Chaplin, had an impact on everyone's life in the early 1900's. He made more people laugh than any other man who ever lived and changed the way people looked at the world. His films were for the underdog, and with great pity and understanding, his films were about him.

## CHARLIE CHAPLIN

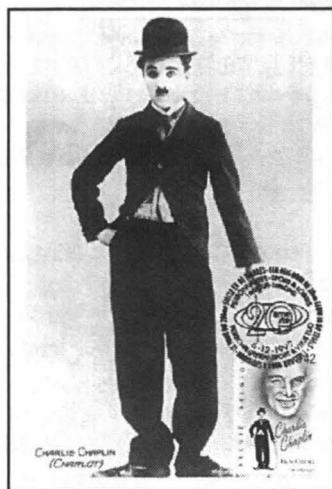
### Clockwise from Left:

(Figure 1) CHARLIE CHAPLIN IN THE FAMOUS CLOWN CHARACTER OF 'TRAMP'.  
Issue: Dec. 6, 1999. For: The 20th Century. Cancel: First Day, Brussels, special mention: '20th CENTURY IN 80 STAMPS, SPORTS, LEISURE, PERSONALITIES.'

(Figure 2) 'THE TRAMP' (1915) - CHAPLIN MADE HIS FIRST APPEARANCE AS THE 'TRAMP' CHARACTER. Issue: Sept. 23, 1989. For: Chaplin's Birth Centenary. Cancel: First Day, Boario Terme, special mention and illustration.

(Figure 3) 'THE RINK' (1916) - A COUPLE SKATING ON AN ICE RINK. Issue: Feb. 5, 1962. For: Sports events. Cancel: Mar. 18, 1962, Prague.

(Figure 4) 'SHOULDER IN ARMS' (1918) - CHAPLIN AS A WW1 SOLDIER (On Card). 'THE LITTLE TRAMP' (On Stamp). Issue: Apr. 16, 1978. For: Famous Personalities. Cancel: Sept. 10, 1983, New Delhi.



## CHARLIE CHAPLIN (1889 - 1977) (Continued)

### SILENT MOVIES

#### THE TRAMP (1915)

Chaplin made his first appearance as the "tramp" character in "The Tramp". Charlie is a tramp on the road. A hobo tries to molest a farmer's daughter; Charlie comes to aid. The grateful girl takes Charlie home where he fails as a farmhand. The girl's fiancée arrives. Though a hero, Charlie, knowing he must go, writes a farewell note and leaves for the open road. The film was a bittersweet comedy with a signature ending in which - plucky and resilient after losing in love - this homeless comic hero waddles down life's highway, desolate and utterly alone. His character, the Tramp, was a short, twitchy man with a black mustache, baggy suit and a waddling penguinlike walk. One of his biographers said that Chaplin's costume for the Tramp character personified shabby gentility- the fallen aristocrat at grips with poverty. He said the cane was a symbol of attempted dignity. And he thought his mustache was a sign of vanity.

#### THE RINK (1916)

After amusements working in a restaurant, Charlie uses his lunch break to go roller skating in an ice rink to find romance. Mr. Stout makes advances toward the unwilling Edna (whose father and Mrs. Stout had earlier carried on in the restaurant). After a roller skate ballet, Charlie (now as Sir Cecil Seltzer) is invited to a party at Edna's. All the "couples", including a new partner for Mr. Stout, show up.

#### SHOULDER ARMS (1918)

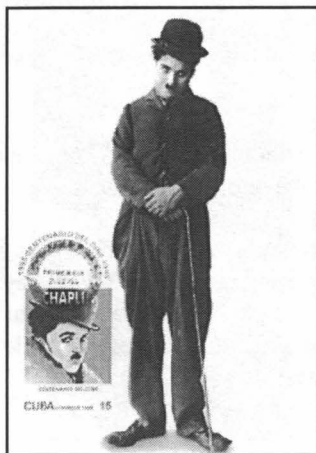
This film deals with the subject of WWI. It was released shortly before the Armistice so it did not help boost national morale. But it did end up as one of Charles Chaplin's most popular films and it was particularly popular with returning doughboys. Charlie is in boot camp in the "awkward squad." Once in France he goes "over the top" and captures thirteen Germans ("I surrounded them"), then volunteers to wander through the German lines disguised as a tree trunk. With the help of a French girl he captures the Kaiser and the Crown Prince and is given a statue and victory parade in New York and then ... fellow soldiers wake him from his dream.

#### THE KID (1921)

**The Kid** was Charlie Chaplin's first full-length movie. The opening title reads: "*A comedy with a smile -- and perhaps a tear*". As a woman (Edna Purviance) leaves a charity hospital with a new-born, and passes a church wedding, she leaves her baby with a pleading note in a limo and goes off to commit suicide but changes her mind. Meanwhile the limo gets stolen by thieves who dumped the baby by a garbage can. **Charlie the Tramp** finds the baby and raises the child himself. **Five years later** Edna has become an opera star but does charity work for slum youngsters in hope of finding her lost boy. Charlie and The Kid make an interesting pair, with The Kid breaking windows with a rock, which Charlie then comes by to repair. In one of the most touching moments of the film, the Kid has to be pulled out of Charlie's arms by the authorities. (This incident came directly from Charlie Chaplin's own childhood, when he was **torn from his mother's arms** as he entered a workhouse). Charlie is later awakened **from a dream** by a kind policeman who reunites him with the Kid at Edna's mansion.

**CHARLIE CHAPLIN**

Clockwise from Left:

(Figure 5) 'THE KID' (1921) - CHAPLIN AND THE KIDIssue: Feb. 25, 2005. For: History of Motion Pictures.Cancel: First Day, Sophia, special mention & illustration .(Figure 6) 'GOLD RUSH' (1925) - Period Photos of the GOLD RUSH TOWNS (Left Top and Bottom: Skagway ). LINE OF PROSPECTORS CLIMBING THE SNOW COVERED CHILKOOT PASS (Right Bottom) Issue: Aug. 21, 1998.For: Klondike Gold Rush Centennial. Cancel: : First Day, Skagway Alaska.(Figure 7) 'GOLD RUSH' (1925) - CHAPLIN DANCING WITH A SALOON LADY.Issue: Feb. 25, 2005. For: History of Motion Pictures.Cancel: First Day, Sophia, special mention & illustration.(Figure 8) CHARLIE CHAPLIN IN THE FAMOUS CLOWN CHARACTER OF 'TRAMP'Issue: Dec. 7, 1995. For: Centenary of Motion Pictures.Cancel: First Day, Havana, special mention: '1895 CENTENARIO DEL CINE 1995'.

## **CHARLIE CHAPLIN (1889 - 1977)**

a Silent Movies' Legend

### **GOLD RUSH (1925)**

During the Great Gold Rush to Alaska, men in thousands came from all parts of the world. The intense cold, the lack of food and a journey through regions of ice and snow were the problems that awaited them. In the spectacular opening scene, there is a view of an endless trail/line of hundreds of prospectors in the Klondike of Alaska in 1898, in the days of the Klondike Gold Rush. They are winding their way along to seek their fortunes, climbing up a mountain through the snow-covered Chilkoot Pass in search of the gold fields: "The Chilkoot Pass. A test of man's endurance. At this point, many turned back discouraged, while others went naively on." And then, "Three days from anywhere - a Lone Prospector," a lone Tramp (Charlie Chaplin) appears. With his cane, he is making his own trail on a snow-covered path, unaware that he is being followed by a bear. The film details the **Little Tramp**, who has made his way to Alaska for the **Gold Rush**, trying to make his fortune. Along the way, he partners with a mad-from-hunger gold digger looking for his lost claim (played by **Mack Swain**, one of Chaplin's regulars), falls in love with a young lady from a saloon (played by **Georgia Hale**), gets on the wrong side of a very dangerous outlaw, and finds his way to happily ever after by the end of the film. It contains some of Chaplin's most hilarious moments, including the '**dance**' of the dinner rolls, Charlie boiling and **eating his own shoe**, and several other classic moments.

### **THE CIRCUS (1928)**

The Circus is one of the Little Tramp's funniest silent movies -- for which he won a special Oscar. It begins with the Tramp attending a small circus, and bumping into a pickpocket, who hides his ill-gotten goods in the Tramp's pocket. This soon leads to a chase, with the police chasing both the pickpocket and the Tramp. After a chase through the hall of mirrors, the Tramp accidentally runs into the circus' center ring, where he is unintentionally hilarious. The circus owner/ringmaster auditions the Tramp as a new clown, only to find out that he can't be funny on purpose -- only unintentionally. The owner hires the Tramp as a menial worker, who is manoeuvred into the ring at each show. His love interest falls for another man, and the Tramp gives the engagement ring he had bought for himself to his rival. The newlywed couple insists that the Tramp continue with the circus; the circus leave but the Tramp leaves the other way.

### **CITY LIGHTS (1931)**

Charlie portrays his world-famous tramp clown, who happens upon a blind flower girl, not realizing at first that she is blind, and then spending the remainder of the movie trying to raise enough money to pay for the operation to restore her sight. It is hilarious, and contains some of Charlie Chaplin's best routines, including Charlie as a boxer, sanitation worker, etc. Charlie breaks the letter of the law to obtain the money for the girl -- and goes to prison for it. She has the operation and regains her sight, at first she doesn't realize who the Tramp is -- she has been under the impression, while blind, that Charlie is well off -- but comes to the realization of who her benefactor truly is; the ending is a tearjerker.



**CHARLIE CHAPLIN (1889 - 1977)****Clockwise from Left:**

(Figure 9) 'THE CIRCUS' (1928) - CHAPLIN IN THE BITTERSWEET COMEDY FEELING LONELY. Issue: Sept. 19, 1989. For: Chaplin's Birth Centenary.

Cancel: First Day, Madrid, special illustration & mention.

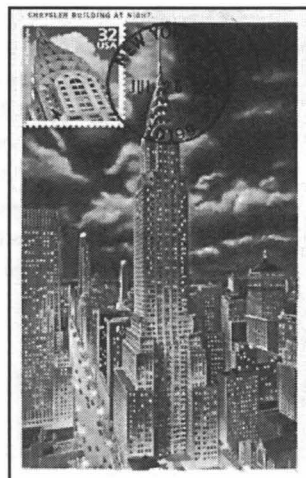
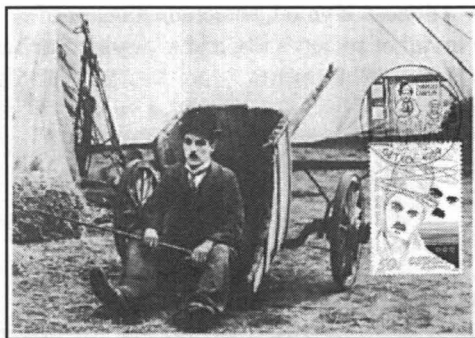
(Figure 10) 'CITY LIGHTS' (1931) - CHAPLIN AS A 'TRAMP' CLOWN WHO DOES EVERYTHING TO RAISE MONEY TO RESTORE A BLIND GIRL'S SIGHT.

Issue: Oct. 16, 1995. For: Centenary of Motion Pictures.

Cancel: First Day, Sophia, special mention & illustration (triple).

(Figure 11) THE CITY LIGHTS OF NEW YORK. Issue: May 28, 1998. For: Celebrate the Century - 1920's. Cancel: July 26, 1999, New York NY

(Figure 12) CHARLIE CHAPLIN IN THE FAMOUS CLOWN CHARACTER OF THE 'TRAMP'. Issue: Apr. 16, 1978. For: Famous Personalities. Cancel: Sept. 10, 1983, New Delhi.



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### MODERN TIMES (1936)

Modern Times is a landmark film. It contains several firsts for Charlie Chaplin. It is Chaplin's first attempt at using a movie to make a social commentary. In this satire on the modern, mechanized world Charlie Chaplin portrays his beloved little Tramp character, working in a factory. The theme of the dehumanization of society. It is his first talking film; in keeping with the movie's theme of the dehumanization of society, all of the voices in the film come from non-living sources (radios, a phonograph record, etc.) It is also the final appearance of Charlie Chaplin's world famous Tramp clown.

### SOUND FILMS

#### THE GREAT DICTATOR (1940)

The Great Dictator was possibly the most well-known of Charlie Chaplin's films, was a timely satire on Nazism and fascism in general, and Adolph Hitler in particular. In it, Charlie Chaplin plays a double role -- **Adenoid Hynkel**, autocratic dictator of Tomania who blames the Jewish people for all of society's ills, and a **Jewish Barber** who happens to be the spitting image of Hynkel. The Jewish Barber was **not** Chaplin's world-famous tramp character, although they clearly share some of the same traits. The film is a true classic, with the famous "dance with the globe" where Hynkel dances with an oversized inflated image of the globe, fantasizing about his eventual conquests. The film ends with the famous "Look Up, Hannah" speech which is verbose, but it fits properly and plays well.

#### LIMELIGHT (1952)

A truly wonderful film; it swiftly became one of my favorites. In a nutshell, it's the story of a once-great stage comedian (**Calvero**, a formerly great tramp clown, played by **Charlie Chaplin**), who's been failing in his career, and has become an alcoholic, who saves the life of **Terry**, a despondent ballerina (played by **Claire Bloom**) from a suicide attempt. The film is a juxtaposition of these two personalities, one who rallies & goes onward, the other who falls further.

It contains some of Chaplin's funniest and finest moments, include a nice pantomime of a **flea circus**, and a duet towards the end of the film with **Buster Keaton**. Interestingly, neither comic legend played their most famous characters; Chaplin wasn't the tramp, but rather another tramp comedian, a **manic violinist**. Keaton wasn't his well-known stone face, but rather a **nearsighted pianist**. Some have suggested that Chaplin jealously cut Keaton's time on screen, but as **Jerry Epstein** (Chaplin's assistant on this film, and the only other person besides Chaplin in the editing room debunks this myth in his book "Remembering Charlie: A Pictorial Biography" noted, Chaplin cut far more of his own moments from the scene. When asked why, Chaplin replied to the effect, that no matter how funny something was, if it didn't move the scene forward, it had to go. Something that modern clowns (and film makers) would do well to take to heart.

**CHARLIE CHAPLIN (1889 - 1977)****Clockwise from Left:**

(Figure 13) 'MODERN TIMES' (1936) - CHAPLIN IN HIS LAST APPEARANCE AS THE 'TRAMP' CLOWN. **Issue:** Sept. 23, 1989. **For:** Chaplin's Birth Centenary.

**Cancel:** First Day, Boario Terme, special mention and illustration.

(Figure 14) 'MODERN TIMES' (1936) - CHAPLIN WORKING IN THE FACTORY. A SATIRE ON THE MODERN MECHANIZED WORLD.

**Issue:** Mar. 14, 1989. **For:** Chaplin's Birth Centenary. **Cancel:** Apr. 7, 1989, Monaco.

(Figure 15) 'GREAT DICTATOR' (1940) - CHAPLIN AS HITLER DREAMING OF CONQUERING THE WORLD.

**Issue:** Feb. 3, 1998. **For:** Celebrate the Century - 1910's. **Cancel:** June 20, 1998, Pavilion NY, special illustration & mention: 'HOLLYWOOD LEGEND'.

(Figure 16) CHARLIE CHAPLIN, NEW YORK 1925; PHOTO BY ED. STEICHEN.

**Issue:** Apr. 16, 1978. **For:** Famous Personalities. **Cancel:** Sept. 10, 1983, New Delhi.

