



The Charles Chaplin Conference

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Thursday 21st

14.00 – 16.00 Keynotes

Chaplin and the Music Hall

David Robinson

Comic performance in music hall

Professor Jacky Bratton

16.30 – 17.30 Music Hall Ancestry

Chaplin and the Harlequinade

Bryony Dixon

Everyone knows that Chaplin came from a music hall background, but few know that he had a successful 20 year career on the stage in this country. Even fewer know how the range of popular theatrical traditions and conventions might have affected the development of his comedy.

I would like to look at the legacy of the harlequinade in Chaplin's work, both directly through the accoutrements of comedic business and also more remotely, as a way of working and method for the development of comedy. I will examine the survival of the harlequinade in the film record and cite examples on Chaplin's interaction with this ancient form.

Teaching Charlie Chaplin How to Walk

By Dan Kamin

I was preparing for the debut of my new solo stage show when the call came from Hollywood. Robert Downey, Jr., researching his role as Charlie Chaplin in Richard Attenborough's upcoming film, had come across a copy of my book *Charlie Chaplin's One-Man Show*. "I think you may be the only person who can help me pull this off," he said.

I knew why he thought that. Parts of my book read like an instruction manual on how to play Charlie Chaplin. Facing the daunting challenge of portraying the man who was arguably the greatest comedian, filmmaker and indeed some would say, actor of the twentieth century, Downey, even then notorious in Hollywood as a brilliant but undisciplined bad boy, realized that for once he couldn't get by on *chutzpah* and native ability. This time he needed a number of highly specific physical acting skills. Within a couple of weeks he flew to Pittsburgh, and we began the task of preparing him for his role. Eventually I was hired by the production both to train Downey and create several of the film's comedy sequences.

To put my work on the Chaplin film into a meaningful context, I will examine in some detail how movement, comedy and meaning are intertwined in the films of Chaplin and his great colleague Buster Keaton. I hope that my analysis may prove interesting for serious Chaplin scholars; the first mimes of genius to leave a permanent record of their work, Chaplin and Keaton's legacy of filmic visual comedy remains unsurpassed. However, very little has been written about these great movement artists from the perspective of their performance technique. Robert's phone call enabled me to come full circle and put my theories about filmic mime to more practical use than I'd ever dreamed possible.

Friday 22nd

9.00 am – 10.30pm

Panel 1 Politics (Chair: Lee Grieveson, University College London)

Proposal: Chaplin on Tour: Intersecting Travel, Publicity and Social Consciousness in *A Comedian Sees the World* (1933-4)

Lisa Stein (Ohio University)

Chaplin's second world tour had a great effect on his later creative life in terms of helping him to develop a social consciousness that found its way into his films. By the mid-1930s, his political opinions "became an inextricable part of his star image" (Maland 133) and his next three films especially (*Modern Times*, *The Great Dictator*, and *Monsieur Verdoux*) were more didactic, perhaps due to this fact. However, at the time of the tour itself, these lofty considerations were secondary to the promotional needs demanded by the release of the risky film it followed – *City Lights* -and the damage to Chaplin's career caused by his divorce to Lita Grey and his problems with the Internal Revenue Service. Enter the travel narrative, and Chaplin's unique use of the genre as a promotional text, for following the tour, Chaplin released a travel series, *A Comedian Sees the World* (1933-4).

Coincidentally for Chaplin, the travel narrative genre proves to be the perfect exploitation tool for the Little Tramp persona because it works in tandem with the audience's accumulated knowledge about him-that he often enters the film on a road and leaves the same way, that he usually carries all his belongings with him and that he must rely on his adaptability to strange environments and strange people in order to survive from day to day. It was up to Chaplin, then, to conflate his public persona-the narrator of the travel book-with his filmic one in order to allow him to effectively cash in on the promotional value of this text. This paper will examine the critical timing of Chaplin's second overseas tour, his seemingly dire promotional needs at the time, and the part this tour and the resulting travel narrative, *A Comedian Sees the World* played in this scenario.

'Duty is in the eye of the beholder': Charlie Chaplin, Chaplinitis and the First World War.

Andrew Horrall, Library and Archives Canada

The First World War was a static campaign of attrition. By mid-1915 British and Dominion military authorities in Flanders were sponsoring sports leagues, cinemas and stage entertainments in the hopes of maintaining troop morale in the face of this seemingly endless fight. The latest films were shown on the Western Front, while troops coming back from leave in London brought with them the most up-to-date music hall and pantomime skits and jokes. By incorporating these into military stage shows, slang, songs and humour, troops established a vital link with the civilian lives they had left behind.

No popular cultural figure was imitated as often, or resonated as deeply with the troops as the Little Tramp.

This is because Chaplin's career coincided with the war. When the troops marched away in August 1914, Chaplin was already one of the cinema's rising stars and by 1915 had become one of the most famous men on earth, thanks to the Chaplinitis craze. However, unlike many of his contemporaries, Chaplin refused to return to Britain, enlist, support the war publicly or include patriotic material in his films until 1917. Even then he was a reluctant jingo.

Meanwhile, British and Dominion troops demanded that Chaplin's films be screened in their cinemas, impersonated him in concert parties, drew him in graffiti and cartoons, and invoked his image as a means of mocking senior war leaders and petty military regulations. Troops recognised that the Little Tramp's picaresque adventures, in which powerful men threatened, but never defeated, his jumble-sale gentility, was an allegory for their military lives. If Chaplin could swagger off at the end of a chaotic adventure, they might also survive the war. Though military leaders endorsed troop entertainments, they were uneasy about the effect of Chaplin images. Consequently, their responses veered between tolerance and repression.

Incorporating evidence from soldiers' newspapers and the civilian press, government records, diaries, memoirs, letters and oral testimony, this paper examines both Charlie Chaplin's personal response to the war, and the ways that British, Australian and Canadian troops co-opted his image. In doing so, this paper argues that popular culture provided one of the most important, though little understood, responses to the First World War.

I am an archivist in charge of military records at Library and Archives Canada (formerly the National Archives of Canada). I earned a PhD in history at Cambridge, where my thesis examined the Edwardian entertainment industry. An extended version of this work was published in 2001 by Manchester University Press as *Popular Culture in London c. 1890-1918: The Transformation of Entertainment*. I am currently researching popular cultural responses to the First World War. I published a version of this Charlie Chaplin paper in *Canada and the Great War*, ed Briton C Busch, Montreal, McGill-Queen's, 2003.

"The First Political Movie Star: Charlie Chaplin and the Rise of Visual Politics"
Steven J. Ross, History Department, University of Southern California

Known throughout the world as the loveable "Tramp," Charlie Chaplin was also at the vanguard of a new form of politics for a new century. Visual politics, as practiced by Chaplin, represented a new form of political communication that bypassed traditional authorities and spoke directly to millions of working-class men and women who felt as though no one understood or cared about the hardships they faced every day. But Chaplin did. A childhood of poverty and humiliation turned him into an instinctual radical: he instinctually favoured the poor over the rich, labour over capital, humane socialism over harsh capitalism. His early silent films popularized a scathing anti-authoritarian perspective that mocked the power and legitimacy of those who continually gave ordinary Americans a hard time: employers, foremen, police, landlords, judges, and the idle rich. Whatever their political belief, most Americans shared Chaplin's distrust of and distaste for those in powerful positions. His films, from 'Making a Living' (1914) to 'The Great Dictator' (1940), gave life to these sentiments and did so in a way that amused and inspired millions of Americans. As one newspaper observed in 1915, "Charlie Chaplin could become President if he were to have political ambitions." No wonder FBI head J. Edgar Hoover had Chaplin tailed for over fifty years!

Like Hoover, people in power were afraid of a medium that brought political messages directly to a mass public in a manner far more engaging than the words of traditional politicians. And no silent star did this more effectively than the man millions of Americans affectionately called "Charlie." Although Chaplin's visual politics were anti-authoritarian, his personal politics were decidedly Left. During the first several decades of the twentieth century, he quietly supported a wide variety of labour and socialist causes. As fascism continued to spread across Europe in the 1930s, Chaplin ventured beyond the screen and joined with other Popular Front stars in

speaking out against fascism in Spain, Nazism in Germany, and economic injustice at home. Breaking with his longstanding tradition of pantomime, Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* contained a final scene in which Charlie delivered a highly polemical speech that called for world peace and understanding.

Ironically, Chaplin was most effective politically when his movies were silent. When he began speaking out in the 1930s - on the screen and off the screen - he lost a good part of his audience. When, after years of persecution by the political Right, he finally decided to leave the country in 1952, gossip columnist and staunch anti-communist Hedda Hopper told her readers, "I abhor what he stands for, while I admire his talents as an actor. I would like to say, "Good riddance to bad company." This paper focuses on Chaplin's political evolution and activities from his first screen appearance in 1914 through the early 1940s. As Chaplin grew more politically sophisticated over the years, so, too, did his films. While anti-authoritarianism remained at the core of his visual politics, by the 1920s and 1930s his movies also assumed a sharper attack on the foibles of American life: from critiques of the excessive materialism of the 1920s to the cruel nature of assembly-line production in the 1930s, and finally to comic but pointed attacks of Nazis in the 1940s. More than any other star of the silent era, Chaplin was responsible for positioning actors to assume a prominent public role in speaking out, on and off the screen, about the most controversial issues of the day.

Panel 2. Writing and criticism (Chair: Amy Sargeant, Birkbeck College, University of London)

Towards a Kinesics of the Post-Neorealist Body: Giulietta Masina and Bazin's Chaplin
Karl Schoonover

When Giulietta Masina first rose to popularity in Fellini's films of the mid-1950s, such as *Le Notti di Cabiria* and *La Strada*, the international press dubbed her the female incarnation of Chaplin. The popularity of these two films seemed to depend upon Masina's highly gestural performance and her personification of the little tramp. This paper considers the apparent transcultural legibility of her physical expressivity in relation to post-Neorealist filmmaking, in particular the status of indexicality in Fellini's early films. In doing so, I examine why Andre Bazin - probably the best-known chronicler of film realism and a critic widely read in this period - so adamantly rejected the common comparison of Masina to Chaplin.

Bazin celebrated these two films of Fellini, defending them against attacks from Italian critics, and seeing in them "a realism of appearances." Surprisingly, his essays on *Cabiria* and *La Strada* ignore the physical qualities of Masina's performance. During the same period, Bazin wrote numerous essays on Chaplin in which he admits an abiding fascination with Chaplin's physical comedy and its ability to visually manifest what makes cinema a uniquely material medium. Throughout these essays, Chaplin serves as an exemplary figure through which, I argue, Bazin can describe the cinematic as quality that hovers between the photographic indexicality of the still and the illusion of movement. Why then could Masina's exceptionally physical performances not also serve as emblem of cinema's unique means of representation?

Bazin's refusal to analyze Masina's body with the same rigour with which he addresses Chaplin's serves as the starting point for my paper. Then working against this critic's intent, I outline the value of applying Bazin's insights on Chaplin to the particularly physical moments in Fellini's two films. My analysis hopes to uncover the

role Masina's performance style plays in these films' articulations of post-neorealist filmmaking and begin to address how indexicality is thematized in these works.

Chaplin on Chaplin: Writings on Film

Sidney Gottlieb, Professor of Media Studies, Sacred Heart University

Chaplin's autobiographical writings are well known, and though they are not always trusted to give an accurate picture of real events in his life, they have been integrated into the canon of his works and consulted for what they tell about at least his view of himself in and out of film. Far less well known, and often quickly dismissed, are his essays on film, published mostly early in his career. I propose a careful examination of these essays as valuable documents affording a great deal of insight into and information about Chaplin's ideas on comedy and cinema (his own and others') and about the creation of his sense of himself and his image as a performer, artist, thinker, and public figure. I discuss this material in the major part of my presentation, focusing on the key ideas in a few particularly important essays: *What People Laugh At* (1918), on archetypal comic situations and techniques; *We Have Come to Stay* (1922), a plea for cinema as an art addressing serious themes and avoiding conventional moralizing, and an extended analysis of film acting; *Does the Public Know What It Wants?* (1924), detailing his complex perception of and relationship with film audiences; and his preface to Gilbert Seldes' *Movies for the Millions* (1937), a critique of censorship and argument for a grown-up cinematic art.

Chaplin is often criticized for taking himself too seriously, for being a faux rather than a real intellectual, and for endangering his art and genius whenever he ventured beyond instinct and intuition to analyze and explain himself. On the contrary, I feel that the Chaplin that emerges when we consider his writings on film is akin to the *Unknown Chaplin* revealed by Brownlow and Gill in their path-breaking exploration of his working method: one who is somewhat more painstaking, probing, thoughtful, and analytical than we often acknowledge.

Freedom Fighters: Some Thoughts on the Friendship and Artistic Kinship Shared By Charles Chaplin And Graham Greene

Neil Sinyard, University of Hull

It is a curious coincidence that two of the most cosmopolitan of twentieth century artists, Charles Chaplin and Graham Greene should have died in the same region and quite close to one another- in Vevey in Switzerland. By the time of Chaplin's death in 1977 they were good friends and their artistic sympathies and kinship were equally close. Greene had praised *Woman of Paris* in one of his first pieces of film criticism and in a manner that intriguingly foreshadows his own narrative style (there is a fleeting but unmistakable homage to Chaplin's film in *The Third Man*). He was to hail *Modern Times* as a work of genius when he reviewed it in 1936. Later it is Greene who will suggest to Chaplin that he writes his autobiography and help guide it through to publication. It is Greene who will come to Chaplin's defence in a famous open letter to *The New Statesman* in 1952 when Chaplin is being hounded into exile by McCarthyist factions in America, a letter which, I would argue, subliminally gives Chaplin the idea for *A King In New York*.

In my paper, I would wish to outline not only the personal admiration of the two men for each other but also their artistic affinities. Both stressed the importance of their childhoods in an understanding of their work; England made them; they had a similar political outlook, particularly a so-called 'anti-Americanism' that generated extensively documented files on them both by the FBI; there is much in common between Monsieur Verdoux and Harry Lime as charismatic charmers whose murderous cynicism echoes the moral malaise of a fallen post-war world. Finally there is something similar about their artistic reputations. 'When I hear a critic describe Chaplin as over-rated,' wrote Sean French, 'I feel as if a molehill has said that Mount Everest's reputation for height is undeserved.' I feel the same about those critics who put Greene in the 'second division' of major novelists. These two great artists do more than entertain: they sound the century.

11.00 – 13.00 Keynote sessions

11.00 Chaplin and the Modernist/Modern Body

Tom Gunning

12.00 Chaplin, *The Circus* and Modern Mimesis

Professor David Trotter, Cambridge University

My proposition is that Chaplin should be considered modern, and even Modernist, by virtue not of anti-mimesis (Modernism's habitual calling-card), but of hypermimesis. His films consistently demonstrate an interest in mimicry for mimicry's sake. Charlie imitates to excess.

I begin by examining scenes in the Essanay and Mutual films which involve the realisation, on Charlie's part, of sheer resemblance: either to an object/machine, or to another man.

These scenes are remarkable both for their construction of narrative space, and for the fantasies (of automatism, of homoerotic encounter) they entertain.

But what, Bazin asked, makes Charlie run? What drives him to hypermimesis? Chaplin has always been crucially at issue in those phenomenological approaches (Bazin, Kracauer, Cavell) to an understanding of screen-presence (of the mimesis specific to cinema) which when pressed hard enough yield a contrary fascination with evidence of absence, of loss, removal, vertigo: madness (Bazin), waste-matter (Kracauer), the sublime (Cavell). Charlie, Cavell might say, combines the 'intensity of mystery' with the 'intensity of mechanism'. He is pure 'incarnation' (Bazin), and perpetually in camouflage. I shall argue that what takes Charlie over, in the scenes I have described, is a will-to-automatism.

In the final section of the paper I will discuss the reworking of the rhetorical figure of hypermimesis in *The Circus*, a masterpiece of narrative art.

14.00 - 15.30

The restoration of the Chaplin Keystone films

The panel will present the latest developments in the international project to restore the Chaplin Keystone titles from the perspective of three of its main participants: the Bologna Archive represented by Marianna de Sanctis; the NFTVA, represented by Kieron Webb, and Chair Davide Pozzi.

16.50 – 18.30

Panel Discussion: Chaplin, His Critical Reception and the Issue of Sentiment.

Laura Marcus, University of Sussex, Ian Christie, Birkbeck College, University of London, Charles Maland, University of Tennessee Michael Hammond, University of Southampton (Chair) , Tom Gunning, University of Chicago

This panel seeks to open discussion on the importance that sentiment has played in the Chaplin's critical reception and its role in claims made for the merits and shortcomings of his work by popular critics and intellectuals alike. Each member of the panel will introduce a perspective on sentiment in Chaplin's career and art with a brief five to 10 minute presentation ranging from his use of melodrama to the role that sentiment played in establishing Chaplin as cinematic 'genius' with contemporary critics.

Saturday 23rd

9.00 – 10.30

Panel 1 Influence and Impact I (Chair Frank Scheide, University of Arkansas)

Dancing on Fire and Water: *Charlot* and *L'Esprit Nouveau*

Amy Sargeant (Birkbeck College, University of London)

The paper will discuss the critical reception of Chaplin in France, referring especially to Elie Faure's 20s treatise *Danse sur le feu et l'eau*, and his articles for the international journal, *"l'Esprit Nouveau*. I shall discuss the aesthetic and social programme of the journal and suggest why for its contributors, Charlot was such a potent, heroic and significant figure. Even in the titling of the films the French distribution, it will be noted Charlot is affirmed as the standardised, recurrent motif of a series.

I shall be less concerned with Chaplin as a comic than with the performances in which he is at his most elegant (a foil indeed for the comedy or comedic potential of many other sequences) Illustrations will be drawn from *Sunnyside*, *Carmen*, *The Rink*, *Gold Rush*. Chaplin's dancing in these films will be shown to embody Faures's hopes for a new monochromatic art of cine-plastics.

I shall mention Chaplin's own appreciation of Duncan, Nijinsky, Pavlova whom he met as fellow celebrities but also as artists whose work he respected, and Nazimova whom critics invoked alongside *Charlot*.

The Tramp, the Child, and the Jew: Chaplin, Dickens, and Oliver Twist.

Joss Marsh, (Indiana University, Bloomington)

It is a *cliché* of Chaplin criticism that this or that moment or move in the work - or the life - is "Dickensian": sentimental, transformative, urban-gritty - whatever we take "Dickensian," at that point in time, to mean. It is a largely unconsidered *cliché*. But this paper does not intend to avoid it: instead, it seeks to return it to life, bringing scattered perceptions together, and new research to bear upon them, in a consolidated consideration of Dickens's meaning for Chaplin. "All of us read him in childhood," wrote Eisenstein, explaining Griffith - "gulped him down greedily": this paper traces the contours of that greed, in the cross-media influence that Dickens exerted over the work - and the life - of one "of us," the first generation of film artists, children of the "Dickensian" 19th century.

Chaplin's Dickens was the Dickens of *Oliver Twist* (which he "read and re-read" "constantly"), the "Inimitable's" grotesque and emotional parable of institutional oppression, childish vulnerability, urban crime, maternal yearning, and hunger ("Please, sir, I want some more"). That novel provides the rhetorical small change and background colour of *My Autobiography* (1964), and (as Harry Geduld has documented) the model for Chaplin's long-neglected 1916 attempt to fix his image as artist and celebrity, *Charlie Chaplin's Own Story*, narratives that are "peculiarly unreliable" as factual autobiography, but intimately revealing as imaginative acts and self-fashionings.

But Dickens figures large in the work, too—above all, in *The Kid*. Faced with the challenge of feature length, Chaplin fell back upon the familiar, reworking *Twist*, both as large narrative structure (bastard and cast-off orphan learns the "curious game" of crime, is restored at tale's end to the lost maternal embrace) and in incidental detail

(the Kid sits up in bed, over-sized mannish cap on his head, to read the Police Gazette). Chaplin's mythic self-representation as a grown-up lost child is sanctified in *The Kid* by identification with *Oliver Twist*. (Not to mention the Artful Dodger.)ⁱ

But there is more. *Oliver Twist* was not only a book but one of the mainstays of the Victorian and Edwardian stage. That Chaplin experienced it as such in his formative years is another key to his art. For the version in which Chaplin most intensely experienced *Twist* was Beerbohm Tree's production of 1895, repeatedly revived through the 1910s. In it, Tree as Fagin took centre stage: it was a high- (and low-) watermark in the history of Victorian racial 'impersonation', and of prejudice as the spur to performance.

It was as Tree, playing Fagin, that, at the age of sixteen, Chaplin had himself photographed in full-throttle imitation (reprint *My Autobiography* 1991): playing Jewish, a British version of black-face, was a component part of Chaplin's artistic make-up, part of his 19th-century inheritance, and from the performance history of Dickens, and *The Kid* replays *Oliver Twist* in casting the Tramp as Fagin (the benign Fagin, and Fagin the performer, that Dickens's profoundly anti-Semitic text also sometimes allows him to be). Nor, finally, did Chaplin have to rely solely on memory (however vivid) to do so. He took a refresher course, new research reveals, in 1916, when he played the Dodger to Tree's Fagin in a last revival of the "renowned thespian's" most famous play, a benefit performance for the Red Cross, in Los Angeles.

From Chaplin to Kabuki

By Ono Hiroyuki

It is not generally known that in August, 1931, just six months after its world premiere (and three years before it opened in Japan), *City Lights* was adapted in Japan as a Kabuki theatre piece entitled *Komori no Yasusan*. This lecture will offer evidence of Chaplin's influence on traditional Japanese culture by comparing *City Lights* to *Komori no Yasusan*.

Kimura Kinka, one of the most popular playwrights of the day, moved the setting of the story to Ryogoku (now a part of Tokyo) during the Edo era (1603-1867). The opening scene from *City Lights* was changed to the unveiling of a statue of Buddha. The cabaret scene in the original film became a Geisha play, and the famous boxing sequence was transformed into a sumo women's wrestling match. All of which suggests that Kimura exercised great latitude in developing his plot, while remaining true to the basic outline of *City Lights*.

But there are notable differences between the film and the Kabuki play. In some scenes, Kimura tones down the satire found in the original. The title character in *Komori no Yasusan* is based on a well-known tramp figure in Kabuki theatre. It is significant that this historical Kabuki tramp was being compared to Chaplin's screen character. Kimura did not devise a similar-sounding Japanese name for Charlie, but instead borrowed one from a well-known Kabuki character. This adaptation reflects the deep roots of traditional Japanese culture, while tapping into the considerable affinity the Japanese have always had for Chaplin's screen persona.

The talk will conclude with an update on plans currently underway in Japan for a revival of *Komori no Yasusan*.

Panel 2 Receptions – Germany and the USA (Chair: Michael Hammond, University of Southampton)

Movies, Director/Performers, and Cultural History: Conceptualizing Chaplin and American Culture

Charles Maland, University of Tennessee

One of the highlights of my graduate school years was the chance to see, in chronological order, 16mm prints of all the Chaplin feature films, one per week, starting with *The Gold Rush* and ending with *A King in New York*. Seeing nearly the entire body of Chaplin's features in such a compressed time made me appreciate even more Andrew Sarris's observation in *The American Cinema*: "Viewed as a whole, Chaplin's career is a cinematic biography on the highest level of artistic expression" (41).

I was studying in the Program in American Culture at the University of Michigan at the time, it was just before Robert Sklar moved from Michigan to NYU, and the reading I did about Chaplin in the considerable scholarship to that time made me more curious about both his amazing popularity worldwide in the 1920s and 1930s and the hostility he engendered in certain sectors of American culture in the 1940s and 1950s. The previous scholarship gave me a good idea of how the popularity came about, but I had a difficult time pinning down what precisely happened to deflate Chaplin's public reputation and under what circumstances he decided to leave his country of residence for nearly 40 years in 1952.

A few years later seemed the right time to try to do a book about Chaplin and his relationship to American culture, not a biography, but a cultural history about the evolution of Chaplin's public reputation. In my talk, I'd like to discuss some of the most conceptions that helped me organize my research and writing. In addition, because Chaplin and his star image were so widely known around the globe, I'd like to pose some questions that arose in my research that were outside the scope of my project but that I hope scholars from other national contexts might answer or pursue in the future.

His enormous, trans-national popularity
Questioning Chaplin's Popularity in Germany, 1925-1932

by Joseph Garncarz

In my paper, I would like to question Chaplin's popularity with German audiences during the years 1925 to 1932. German left-wing intellectuals such as Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin and Kurt Tucholsky saw Chaplin as a great artist who combined laughter with revolutionary politics. However, their enthusiasm does not say anything about Chaplin's popularity with a larger German audience.

I will question Chaplin's popularity in Germany using a variety of primary sources, which have never been used before for that purpose. Firstly, I will draw on popularity polls of films from the trade journal *Film-Kurier* and on popularity polls on stars from the fan magazine *Deutsche Filmwoche*, which both allow me to judge Chaplin's popularity on a national level. Secondly, I will draw on popularity polls of films from Berlin and on an empirical study of the popularity of films in Cologne, which allow measuring Chaplin's popularity in big German cities as well as with distinct social classes.

These primary sources give enough evidence to come to a clear thesis. The success of Chaplin's feature films in Germany was variable. *The Gold Rush* (German premiere in 1925) and *City Lights* (German premiere in 1931) were very popular in big German cities, but not in the whole country. In addition, these films were very popular in first-run and especially in working class theatres but not in typical middle class theatres. Only *The Circus* (German premiere in 1928) was successful with larger audiences. The reason for this was arguably not Chaplin but a perfect fit with the very popular tradition of circus films in Germany. Since the German middle class did not like Chaplin, he never made it into the lists of top stars.

The (Un)Timeliness of Satire: The Reception of the *The Great Dictator* in West Germany, 1958-1973

Peter Krämer

When *The Great Dictator* (1940) was re-released in West Germany in 1973, the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, a leading daily newspaper, welcomed it as the "most important film satire" ever, and the religious paper *Leben und Glauben* declared it to be as "timely as when it was made". The film's success at the German box office exceeded all expectations: At a time when almost no re-releases appeared on the annual lists of the ten top grossing movies, *The Great Dictator* was the ninth highest grossing movie in West Germany in 1973.

In this paper, I want to contextualize this success first by looking at the problematic history of *The Great Dictator* in Germany before the 1970s. For obvious reasons the film was not released during the war, and after the war United Artists (like other American studios handling films with sensitive subject matter) withheld it for over a decade because it was felt that the film was likely to alienate German audiences. When *The Great Dictator* was finally released in 1958, critics were divided (newspaper headlines said it was "timely" or that it "comes to late"), and its success was limited - which was in line with the box office performance of the vast majority of American imports at the time.

Secondly, I will situate the success of *The Great Dictator* in relation to trends in the German box office charts in the 1970s. The number of Hollywood films in the annual top ten had increased from one or sometimes two in the 1950s to on average three films per year. In addition to youth-oriented films like *Easy Rider*, children's (or family) films were leading the way, including the re-release of Chaplin's *Modern Times* in 1972. The appeal of Chaplin as a family entertainer thus contributed to the success of *The Great Dictator*. At the same time, the film's subject matter was now very much in vogue, especially among youth audiences - as is evidenced by the series of films about Hitler and/or the Nazi period which were featured in the top ten in the 1970s.

Both the historical and the 70s section will make extensive use of reviews and articles from a range of German newspapers and magazines, and also draw on the work of Joseph Garnarz concerning the selection, modification and success of imported films in West Germany.

12.30 Presentation

Restoring the Music For *A Woman of Paris* (1923)

Timothy Brock

It is not perhaps widely known that Chaplin scored most of his own films with the arrival of sound. As Timothy Brock writes:

,Charles Chaplin's gifts seem boundless. A man who writes, directs, produces and acts seemingly could not have the time, or energy, to do more to enhance his own films. Composing film music is a time-consuming, often unrecognised art form that only a handful of people in 1935 were doing very well. Yet his music, seamlessly woven into the fabric of the film's imagery, is elemental to the film's long-running success... Although untrained in traditional western musical notation, in other words a self-taught violinist, cellist and pianist who played exclusively by ear, Chaplin was nevertheless a gifted musician with an innate sense of musical construction. To notate his music, he engaged various arrangers and orchestrators who would in turn write down his thematic material and orchestrate it to his exacting standards. The colour of the orchestration was very clear in Chaplin's mind, and it took great efforts to ensure that what was down on paper correlated with what he, as composer, had in mind. Regardless of which arranger he was working with on any given film, there is a running line throughout. This germinal voice is most identifiable in his gift for melody and harmony, and in his ability to accompany action perfectly. Like his famous character, his scores, too, employ a perfect balance of comedy, pathos and skill'

Despite this talent the score for *A Woman of Paris* done late in his life has always been problematic. Timothy Brock in association with the Chaplin family has specialised in (among many things!) the restoration of Chaplin's scores and has reworked the score completely but sensitive to Chaplin's themes and style.

Timothy Brock's association with silent film began in 1986 when he was commissioned by the Olympia Film Society to write a score to accompany the G.W. Pabst film, 'Pandora's Box'. In 1992 he began a long musical relationship with Film Preservation Associates, headed by film historian David Shepard, and has composed and conducted ten feature-length film scores, including F. W. Murnau's *Faust*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, and *Nanook of the North*. He was commissioned by 20th Century Fox to write a score for *Sunrise*. He has conducted his film and concert hall works throughout the United States, as well as in Canada, Europe and Japan.

In January of 1999 he was asked by the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra in cooperation with the Association Chaplin in Paris to reconstruct and restore for live performance Charlie Chaplin's 1936 score to *Modern Times*. This was followed by a series of restored scores for Chaplin's major works which have been the highlight of the Bolgona Film Festival ever since. *A Woman of Paris* was received with rapturous applause in the opera house at Bologna on the 9th of July and we hope that audiences in Great Britain will be able to see it before long.

2.00 Archive Presentations

Progetto Chaplin

Cecilia Cenciarelli, Cineteca Bologna

Cineteca di Bologna has been working for almost three years now, under the auspices of the Association Chaplin/the Chaplin's family, at the rather ambitious project of researching, cataloguing, digitising and preserving the entire Charlie Chaplin paper collection ranging from around 1890 to the 1980s consisting of dozens of scenarios, screenplays, drawings and sketches, set stills, daily production reports, production and distribution correspondence and censorship documents.

The 2003 inauguration of the online catalogue, charliechaplinarchive.org, and of the Charlie Chaplin research centre at the Cineteca library, has allowed us to show the first results of a work, that once completed, will allow the world's scholars and cinephiles to access to this inexhaustible heritage.

Focusing on the importance of the so-called "extra-film" or "non-film" funds as primary source for research, the paper will try to offer a thorough view of Chaplin through his own papers, drawing from different periods of his life and from various type of documents: his writing and working methods, his independence as a director/producer, the transition between silent and sound filmmaking, his relationship with intellectuals and refugees in Hollywood and with the American censorship.

Particular attention will be devoted to Chaplin's unfinished project and short stories.

The Charles Chaplin Collections at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

Beth Werling

The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County has received funding from the Getty Grant Program to electronically catalogue a number of its collections, including its Chaplin collections, to make them more readily available to scholars. The electronic catalogue initiative is part of a larger endeavour on the Natural History Museum's behalf to raise awareness in the scholarly community of the resources available to film historians at the Museum. This talk will focus on the materials preserved at the Natural History Museum, and the various ways they can be used to research, discuss, and dissect Chaplin's film and stage career.

Beginning in 1932, Charlie Chaplin made a series of donations to the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Art, and Science (now known as the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County). The items documented his professional career, not his personal life, and because they were collected for exhibition purposes tend to be visual in nature.

Among the props, photographs, political cartoons, press clippings, awards and certificates he gave, the most significant piece in the collection is Mr. Chaplin's tramp costume from *City Lights*.

In addition to the materials Chaplin himself donated, a number of his colleagues also contributed items to the Museum covering Chaplin's career. Cameraman Rollie Totheroh provided stills and behind-the-scenes photos, Stanley [Laurel] Jefferson gave a small collection pertaining to his work with Chaplin in the Karno Company,

from his one-time studio manager Edward Biby was received a manuscript detailing Jackie Coogan's discovery as well as images of life at the Chaplin Studios, and David Alpert, the co-owner of the Chaplin Studios in the 1970s and 80s, recently donated artifacts pertaining to the studio when Chaplin worked there.

These Chaplin collections present not only fresh materials, but also new avenues of exploration for scholars. Although they are not composed primarily of traditional archival material, much can be learned about Chaplin and his creative style from studying the objects he crafted and used for his films. This talk will introduce these objects to its most important audience—Chaplin scholars.

4.00 Parallel Sessions

Panel 1 Imitators

Chaplin's Tramp: Doppelgängers And Reflections

Kathryn Millard, Macquarie University

'Chaplin does not only belong to film history, Chaplin belongs to history'

Gilbert Adair

This presentation investigates the culture of mimesis that flourished in the wake of Chaplin's Tramp, a culture which continues to emerge and evolve. So much so, that 2005 finds street kids in Brazilian favelas aping his gestures and mannerisms, a Tokyo salaryman playing a Chaplin-themed pachinko machine and an Indian advertising company shooting a boot polish commercial featuring a Chaplin imitator.

Chaplin's Tramp, in his baggy pants and coat, made his first appearance on screen in 1914. Within months, 'Chaplinitis' swept the world along with a host of Chaplin impersonators, imitators and translators. Over the subsequent nine decades plus, reincarnations of Chaplin's Tramp have continued to appear in cinema, television, theatre and advertising in the U.S.A., Europe, Asia, Latin America and Australasia as the Tramp has been adapted for local cultural practices and idioms.

Drawing on extensive original research conducted at film and television archives around the world, this presentation considers the phenomenon of Chaplin imitators, doubles and doppelgängers as a way of investigating the global appeal of Chaplin's cinematic creation. How have different cultures, and a range of individuals, indiginised the character to suit their own unique circumstances and agendas? From 1916's *Charlie At The Sydney Show*, to the wave of 'Oriental Charlie's' in 1950's Hong Kong, from newsreel footage of women doing the Charlie Chaplin walk in the improbable environment of Stalin's Russia to Sridevi's Chaplinesque riff in the Bollywood mega-hit *Mr. India*.

Chaplin in Bombay: Postcolonial Appropriations

Manishita Dass, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow & Visiting Assistant Professor,
Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania

This paper draws attention to a neglected aspect of Chaplin's international reception -- the appropriation of his image in *Shree 420* (aka *The Gentleman Cheat* or *Mr. 420*, Raj Kapoor, Hindi, 1955), one of the iconic Bombay films of the 1950s that proved to be extremely popular not just in India but also in

the erstwhile Soviet Union, China, and the Middle East. *Shree 420* features actor-director Raj Kapoor in his signature role as Raj/Raju, a Chaplinesque tramp who sets out, at the beginning of the film, to seek his fortune in the city of Bombay. Raju's picaresque adventures in the metropolis are plotted into a whimsical national allegory, in which the city appears as an emblematic space of India's postcolonial modernity, oscillating between exuberance and disenchantment, the dream of a free society and the reality of social injustice. I argue that *Shree 420* can be viewed not only as a homage to Chaplin but also as a postcolonial reworking of (or variation on) Chaplin's classic commentary on modernity, *Modern Times* (1936). My reading of the film highlights how Kapoor's performance refashions Chaplin's Tramp into an Indian Everyman; it also explores the striking parallels, as well as the telling divergences, between *Shree 420* and *Modern Times*, especially in relation to the question of modernity, thereby touching on theoretical issues of inter-textuality, authorship, reception, and vernacular modernism.

'The Man From Nowhere': Billie Ritchie as Chaplin's Progenitor and Imitator

Dr. Jon Burrows

One of the more striking features of Charlie Chaplin's unprecedented rise to fame in the 1910s was the contemporaneous proliferation of the so-called Chaplin imitators. The label undoubtedly fits some very neatly. Billy West, for example, stole scenarios and mannerisms wholesale from Chaplin. Its habitual application to the film career (1914-1920) of Billie Ritchie is more problematic, however. Ritchie shared a moustache, bowler hat and ill-fitting suit with Chaplin. But other grounds for comparison deserve closer and more cautious scrutiny. Whilst Ritchie's surviving films have various qualities in common with Chaplin's earliest Keystone comedies, one searches in vain for clear attempts to mimic the Essanay and Mutual vehicles. It seems worth noting also that trade papers and fan magazines generally treated Ritchie as a comic star of autonomous substance. And, what is more, as a predecessor of Chaplin's in the Fred Karno company, Ritchie never passed an opportunity to claim that he was in fact the original and Chaplin the imitator.

The paper I am proposing will examine Ritchie's films, his prior theatrical reputation and his star image in the 1910s in an attempt to provide a revised assessment of his relationship to Chaplin. I believe such an investigation could have much to tell us about the pre-filmic sources of Chaplin's comedy, the iconographical meanings of his costume, and whether or not the notions of originality and imitation have any historiographical relevance at all to a judicious understanding of slapstick comedy in this era.

Send In The Clones

Chaplin Imitators: from Stage to Screen, from Circus to Cartoon

Ulrich Ruedel

The inflation of Chaplin imitators in the teens and twenties has often been cited as a major indicator of the Chaplin craze and as a unique testament to his popularity. Yet this not quite sincerest form of flattery is far from unique among famous film comedians, and indeed a fair number of subsequent comics from the silent days well into the seventies shared Charlie's fate in this regard. What does make the Chaplin case unique though is the breadth of media into which the iconic tramp image perfused

via inspiration and imitation. Two often neglected, but intriguing cases will be presented. Famous clown Charlie Rivel actually started his career by adapting the tramp for the circus arena in one of the finest Chaplin imitations ever. And Pat Sullivan and Otto Messmer, the producer and the real father, respectively, of pioneering cartoon character *Felix the Cat* launched their career with a series of Chaplin cartoons such as *Charlie at the Circus*, effectively making the tramp a forerunner of all of the 20th century iconic cartoon characters.

Panel 2 Modernity/Modernism

Capitalism, Patriarchy, and After-Image in Modern Times

Brooke Campbell, Department of Comparative Literature,
Emory University

Some see the opening of the *Modern Times* sequence *Dreams of Everyday Life* as the snapshot of love: A husband leaves for work, lunchbox in hand. His wife follows him a few steps into the yard to kiss him goodbye not once, but twice. She waves as he departs, then skips joyfully back into the house. At first glance, it seems that even the Little Tramp and his gamine, watching from the curb, witness this sequence as such. They imagine themselves into the snapshot, further embellished by juicy steaks at the dinner hour. Emerging from the reverie, the Little Tramp vows to his gamine, "We'll get a home, even if I have to work for it."

And yet, because work is precisely what the Little Tramp does not do, the two never get a home; they never are the snapshot of love. In this paper, I take this snapshot of love to be a snapshot of a sex/gender system endemic to modern capitalism - an image of patriarchy part and parcel of what Walter Benjamin terms "the inhospitable, blinding age of big-scale industrialism," in its requisite production and reproduction of labour-power. In shutting their eyes to this experience by living "No place—anywhere," I suggest that the Little Tramp and his gamine occupy that space Benjamin assigns Henri Bergson's philosophy: "An experience of a complementary nature in the form of its [big-scale industrialism's] spontaneous after-image" (157). Ultimately, I argue that seeing the Little Tramp and his gamine as an after-image of patriarchy in the age of big-scale industrialism offers spectators a clue to a change in the structure of their sexual experience.

The Automatic Chance of the Modern Tramp: Chaplin and the Historical Avant-Garde

Jennifer Wild, The University of Iowa

'The only expression of the modern man: Dada
The following have subscribed to Movement Dada:
Louis ARAGON, ARCHIPENKO, Henri BERGSON,
André BRETON, Blaise CENDRARS, Charlie CHAPLIN...'
Tristan Tzara, poster for the revue, Mouvement Dada, Zurich, 1919

It is common to discuss Charlie Chaplin's relationship to the European historical avant-garde first in terms of Fernand Léger's kinetic wood construction of Chaplin that he used to animate the opening sequence of his film, *Ballet Mécanique* (1924, France, co-directed by Dudley Murphy). However, other important representations of Chaplin appear in the oeuvre of Léger, as well as in the vaster domain of the

European historical avant-garde both before and after 1924 when Léger transforms *Charlot* into enigmatic cubist form for the cinema screen. This paper examines non-cinematographic representations of Chaplin that emerge from the European avant-garde's experiments in plastic art and publishing between 1919 and 1930. My corpus includes Léger's cubist illustrations for Ivan Goll's *La Chaplinade ou Charlot poète: poème cinématographique* (1921-23); Berlin dadaist Georg Grosz's lithograph *Self-portrait for Charles Chaplin*, (1919); the Futurist Gino Severini's gouache, *Charlot* (1920); Erwin Blumenfeld's Berlin dada photocollage, *Bloomfield, President-Dada-Chaplinist* (1921); French modernist illustrator Jaquelux's lithograph, *Charlot* (no date); Russian Constructivist decorator Sergueï Youtkévitich's drawing, *Charlot* (1926), among others work by Hannah Höch, Hugo Ball, Raoul Hausmann, Jean Cocteau, Jean Pougny (Iwan Puni) and Hans Richter.

These images, in conjunction with the poetic and critical musings of Tristan Tzara, Marcel Janco, Louis Aragon, André Breton, Robert Desnos and Jacques Vaché, signal how Chaplin, as the subject of avant-garde representation, articulated the avant-garde's new experience of cinéphilic rapture before the moving image, and therefore expressed the cinema's emergence as a legitimate medium for avant-garde plastic experimentation and aesthetic reflection: "Charlie Chaplin invented the cinema for us," Phillippe Soupault remarked in hindsight in 1930. Furthermore, in studying how Chaplin's avant-garde representation functioned in part as a metonym for the medium of the cinema and its modern potential, I suggest that these images become a lens through which we may interrogate avant-garde perception/reception of the moving image, as well as the cinema's contribution to the avant-garde's representational revolution at large.

Dissolvance phenomena: Charles Chaplin's influence on Modernism and vice versa
Ms. Romana Turina, University of Indianapolis

The paper will tackle the points of contact, and dissonance, between the early motion picture industry, with a direct focus on Charles Chaplin's early work, and the literary revolution traditionally gathered under the name Modernism. A phenomenon of Dissolvance between the classical division of Drama and Literature will be outlined; findings of the same revolutionary flow of visual narration in both modernism and Chaplin's work will be offered. Thus, Chaplin's capacity to bridge literature and drama in the new form of motion picture will be stated by offering an arguably valuable core of examples, as well as his capacity to affect literary narration (major literary figures will be taken in to account, as for example James Joyce cinematic techniques in writing).

Sunday July 24th

9.00 – 10.30 Panels

Panel 1 Influence and Impact I (Chair: Peter Kramer, University of East Anglia)

Chaplin and the Word

Constance B. Kuriyama, Department of English, Texas Tech University

Chaplin, at least ostensibly, endorsed the Mechanical Salesman's axiom that "Actions speak louder than words." And yet words were an integral part of Chaplin's training and art from the very beginning, and once he had resigned himself to the inevitability of dialogue films, he experimented with words as vigorously as he had earlier experimented with visual techniques, music, and other non-verbal sounds.

Chaplin's early performance experience included singing *E Dunno Where 'E Are* at the age of five, reciting *Miss Priscilla's Cat*, delivering lines as Billy the pageboy, and an attempt at a stand-up routine as a Jewish comedian. His Karno sketches, which are sometimes thought of as pure pantomime, often involved dialogue. Although his skills at physical comedy were far more highly developed than his verbal skills when he began work at Keystone, he had more than a rudimentary foundation in verbal expression and performance on which he could later build.

This paper will cover in some detail Chaplin's successive uses of verbal expression in his films, beginning with the wry, laconic titles of his silent films and concluding with his dialogue films. Prominent among the points to be made will be Chaplin's persisting suspicion of and ambivalence toward words. On the one hand, he recognized the expressive value of words, and made a point of building his vocabulary. On the other hand, he felt that words were often meaningless babble, double-edged and devious, apt both to reveal and conceal the truth, or simply inadequate to convey intricate thought and feeling.

A final issue I will touch on is the claim that Chaplin's dialogue films are verbose. A comparison of actual word counts of his films to those of others suggests that this impression is false.

Charlie Chaplin sings silent requiem: Chaplin's cinema from 1928-1952 as a cinematic statement on the transition from silent films to talking films.

Aner Preminger

The focus of my paper is the way Chaplin dealt with sound and with the absence of sound since his 1928's silent film *The Circus* until his 1952's talking film *Limelight*. My argument is that in all his films during this period he studied various unique ways of using sound and he actually took important part in forming the new language and codes of sound cinema.

Chaplin's important contribution to the transition to sound is ignored by most literature dealing with his art. My thesis is not only that Chaplin invented new ways of using sound in many scenes, used sound for audio gags in similar ways he used props in visual gags, but he also consciously dealt in his narrative in *The Circus*, *City Lights*, *Modern Times*, *The Great Dictator* and *Limelight* with the meaning of sound and with the relationship between silent cinema and talking cinema and with the implication of this relationship on the ability to reflect truth and reality.

Chaplin's Directing and Writing Collaborators

Hooman Mehran

Charles Chaplin performed more functions in film production than anyone before or since. He showed the most versatility on *Limelight* in which he was actor, producer, director, writer, composer, lyricist and choreographer, but he filled most of these functions on many of his other films as well. Although Chaplin fancied himself a total filmmaker, a careful examination of his canon reveals that he owed a particular debt to collaborators who helped him with directing and writing chores. Often these collaborators worked without proper billing. When they did receive screen credit, it was often for lesser duties than what they actually carried out. To add insult to injury, their names were routinely dropped in later years when Chaplin would reedit and reissue his films. Chaplin only gave co-directing credit to Mabel Normand during his first year on the screen, but new research has revealed that there was another unbilled colleague named Dan Albert helping the young, novice director at Keystone. The incredible artistic leap Chaplin made at Mutual in 1916 can be traced in large part to the talented, but unbilled, scenario writer, Vincent Bryan, later a director in his own right. Many of Chaplin's collaborators were sycophantic "yes-men" who contributed little and did his bidding without question, but some, such as Robert Florey, could plausibly claim to being co-directors of the Chaplin films they worked on.

This talk will give an overview of over a dozen of these critical, but relatively unknown, contributors, starting with Normand, and leading right up through Jerry Epstein, Chaplin's last major collaborator. Capsule biographies will set the context, and film clips will be used to illustrate where these collaborators made their distinctive mark on Chaplin's films.

Panel 2 Influence and Impact III: High Art and Mass Culture (Chair: Michael Hammond)

Chaplinitis and Chaplinisme: The diachronic reception of Chaplin's shorts in the film club movement.

Ansje van Beusekom, Utrecht University

While Chaplin definitively turned to the production of long features as *The Gold Rush* in 1926, *The Circus* in 1928 and *City Lights* in 1931, the European film art movement embraced the short tramp comedies of the Teens. From the mid-twenties throughout the thirties it is hard to find a film club program without an early Chaplin comedy, at least in France, England and to a lesser degree in the Netherlands. While the big movie theatres made first class cinema events of the big Chaplin movies, film critics rooted in the film art movement moaned that Charlie/Charlot had become Charles and wasn't as funny anymore as he used to be.

In my paper I would like to compare the popular reception with the intellectual reception of Chaplin in the twenties: in what way did the latter distinguish itself from the first? Especially the 'genre bending' aspects of the long features: combining the

melodramatic with comedy, triggered harsh criticism. Which arguments did the critics use and what 'hidden' agenda's of the avant-garde intellectuals did Chaplin (un) consciously cross?

The Two Spanish Lives of 'Charlot'

Daniel Sanchez

In the beginning of the thirties, two of the first Spanish biographies of Charles Chaplin were published. In 1930, it appeared *The Genius of the Cinematographic Art* by Santiago Aguilar, who worked in the most popular side of literature and cinematographic reviews. The second biography was written by César Muñoz Arconada and it was published in 1931. Opposite to Aguilar, Arconada was an author who worked almost a decade with avant-garde strategies. He could be considered a member of the so-called Generación del 27, for whom Charles Chaplin, called Charlot in Spain, was a very important artistic subject. As a matter of fact, Arconada's book is a consequence of that generalized interest. For both biographies Charlot is a master of human emotions. But Aguilar narrates Chaplin's life from a melodramatic point of view, while Arconada uses a literary style full of avant-garde echoes and a progressive politic consciousness near to communist principles. The idea of a funny star especially for children is present in Aguilar's book, while Arconada's mainly sees in Chaplin the image of the common man who has to fight for changing his miserable destiny. Aguilar rooted his work in the most sentimental and popular perception about Charlot; on the other hand, Arconada took "the tramp" to the centre of some of the most modern European debates about art and politics. In short, these two books are representative examples of how Chaplin was maybe the first star shared by very different kinds of people at the same time he reached different approaches, depending on the cultural and social contexts. In the case of this proposal the context would be the agitated Spain at the first thirties.

11.00 Keynote

The Art of Falling Apart: Chaplin and the Keystone *grotesque*filme.

Jennifer Bean (University of Washington)

12.00 Keynote

Chaplin and the Soviets

Professor Yuri Tsivian, University of Chicago

The cult of Chaplin launched by West European avant-garde artists and poets of the 1920s (Goll, Hellens, Léger) reached Russia early in 1922 via Ilya Erenburg's Constructivist manifesto *And Yet the World Goes Round*, and international avant-garde magazine *Object* which Erenburg edited together with El Lissitski. In Autumn 1922, a special Chaplin issue of the Moscow Constructivist magazine *Kino-Fot* came out with essays on Chaplin by Aleksandr Rodchenko, Nikolai Forreger, Lev Kuleshov and Aleksei Gan; it also contained a series of "Charlot" drawings by Varvara Stepanova which portrayed Chaplin in a schematized geometrical manner common to Constructivist visuals at that time; in 1924 Vladimir Mayakovsky published a poem featuring "Charlot" as a precursor of all-European proletarian revolution. This paper looks at those aspects of Chaplin's acting style that fascinated Soviet left-wing artists and what they made of them; at Chaplin's image in Russian as a "Taylorist actor;" at Chaplin's impact on Kuleshov's workshop; and, more closely, at a strange reference in both Mayakovsky's poem and Stepanova's to a "Chaplin" film which the real Chaplin never made, *Man on a Propeller*.
