



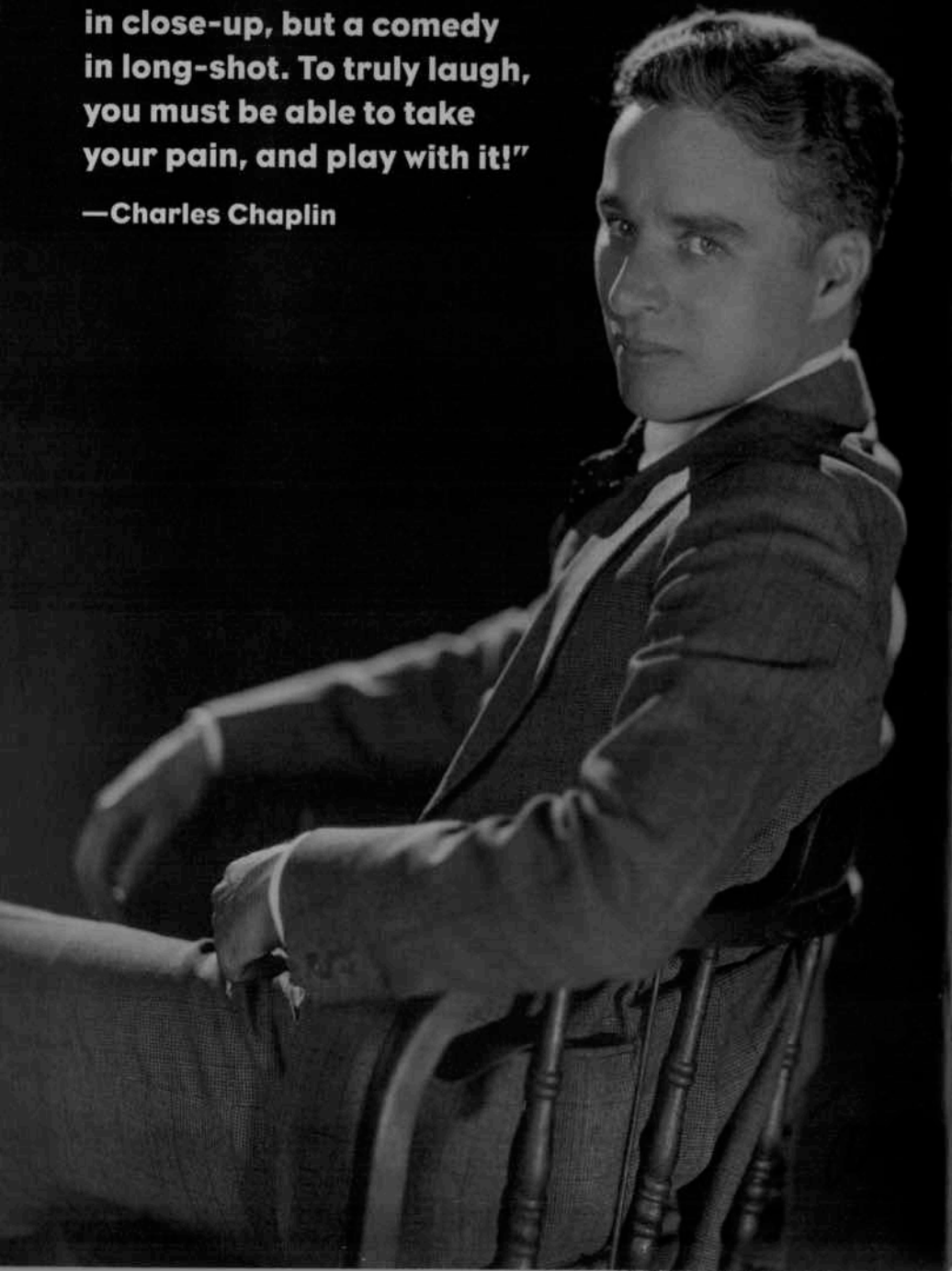
SAN FRANCISCO
SILENT
FILM FESTIVAL

THE LITTLE TRAMP AT 100
A CHARLIE CHAPLIN CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

JANUARY 11 | CASTRO THEATRE | SILENTFILM.ORG

"Life is a tragedy when seen
in close-up, but a comedy
in long-shot. To truly laugh,
you must be able to take
your pain, and play with it!"

—Charles Chaplin



SAN FRANCISCO SILENT FILM FESTIVAL

THE LITTLE TRAMP AT 100

A CHARLIE CHAPLIN CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11, 2014

1:00

**OUR MUTUAL FRIEND:
THREE CHAPLIN SHORTS**

Jon Mirsalis on piano

4:00

THE KID

**Timothy Brock conducting the
San Francisco Chamber Orchestra**

Program will be introduced by Jeffrey Vance

7:30

THE GOLD RUSH

**Timothy Brock conducting the
San Francisco Chamber Orchestra**

Program will be introduced by Jeffrey Vance

Program notes by Jeffrey Vance, author of *Chaplin: Genius of the Cinema* (Harry N. Abrams, 2003) and one of the world's foremost authorities on Charles Chaplin.

The Kid and The Gold Rush ©Roy Export S.A.S.

Music for *The Kid* and *The Gold Rush* ©Roy Export Company Establishment and
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This program made possible by the invaluable help and
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charliechaplin.com

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Front Cover: *The Gold Rush* © Roy Export SAS



No human being is more responsible for cinema's ascendancy as the dominant form of art and entertainment in the 20th century than Charles Chaplin. Yet, Chaplin's importance as a historic figure is eclipsed by the universality of his screen creation, the Little Tramp, who became an iconic figure in world cinema and culture. Building on traditions forged in the Italian *commedia dell'arte* that he learned in the British music halls, Chaplin translated traditional theatrical forms into an emerging medium and changed both cinema and culture in the process. Modern screen comedy began the moment Chaplin donned his derby hat, affixed his toothbrush moustache, and stepped into his impossibly large shoes for the first time.

Cinema audiences first saw the Little Tramp onscreen in Chaplin's second film, *Kid Auto Races at Venice, Cal.* (1914). An "event" comedy for the Keystone Film Company, *Kid Auto Races at Venice, Cal.* reportedly was filmed in 45 minutes to take advantage of a children's car race at the ocean-side resort of Venice, California. The plot is quite simple: the Tramp makes a nuisance of himself while a camera crew attempts to shoot the event. Although

quite primitive, the film is historic not only because it represents the first appearance of the Tramp on film, but also because it manages to record the first audience's reaction to the character. The audience, of course, is the throng of spectators at the race who begin to notice this peculiar fellow causing trouble with a "camera crew." At first the audience does not know what to make of the Tramp, then they begin to smile, then titter, and then laugh at his antics. In those brief moments of discovery, recorded for posterity, a comedic revolution was born.

The genius of the Little Tramp character is that he is so human and familiar—he is one of us. It is remarkable that Chaplin invented him spontaneously on the set one day in 1914. When pioneering comedy producer Mack Sennett directed his new actor to find something funny to wear, Chaplin chose the outfit that became a symbol of downtrodden yet resilient humanity.

OUR MUTUAL FRIEND: THREE CHAPLIN SHORTS

Piano Accompaniment by Jon Mirsalis

Directed by Charles Chaplin

Production Lone Star/Mutual Film Corporation

THE VAGABOND (1916)

Cast Charles Chaplin (Street musician), Edna Purviance (Gypsy drudge), Eric Campbell (Gypsy chief), Lloyd Bacon (Artist), Charlotte Mineau (Mother) **Producer** Henry P. Caulfield **Scenario** Charles Chaplin, Vincent Bryan, Maverick Terrell **Photography** William C. Foster, Roland H. Totheroh **Technical Director** Edward Brewer **Property Master** George Cleethorpe

EASY STREET (1917)

Cast Charles Chaplin (Tramp), Edna Purviance (Mission worker), Eric Campbell (Bully of Easy Street), Albert Austin (Minister), James T. Kelly (Missionary) **Producer** Henry P. Caulfield **Scenario** Charles Chaplin, Vincent Bryan, Maverick Terrell **Photography** Roland H. Totheroh, George C. Zalibra **Technical Director** Edward Brewer **Property Master** George Cleethorpe

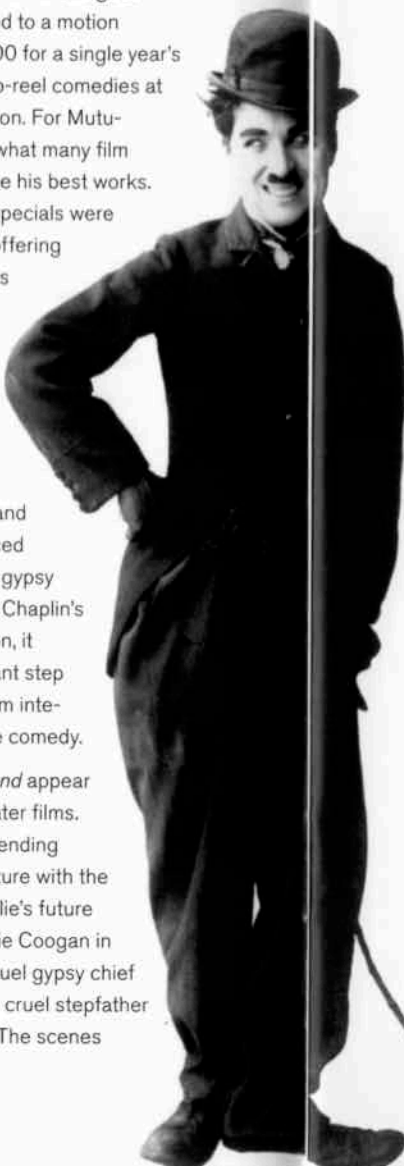
THE CURE (1917)

Cast Charles Chaplin (Inebriate), Edna Purviance (Lady), Eric Campbell (Gentleman with gout), Albert Austin (Spa attendant), Henry Bergman (Masseur) **Producer** Henry P. Caulfield **Scenario** Charles Chaplin, Vincent Bryan, Maverick Terrell **Photography** Roland H. Totheroh, George C. Zalibra **Technical Director** Edward Brewer **Property Master** George Cleethorpe

By 1916, just two years after appearing in his first motion picture, Charles Chaplin had become the most famous entertainer in the world. Buoyed by the enormous success of the comedies he had made for for the Keystone Film Company and later the Essanay Film Manufacturing Company, he was offered the largest contract ever extended to a motion picture star—\$670,000 for a single year's work—to make 12 two-reel comedies at Mutual Film Corporation. For Mutual, Chaplin produced what many film historians believe to be his best works. The Mutual-Chaplin Specials were Chaplin's laboratory, offering unprecedented access to the inner workings of a great cinema pioneer.

The Vagabond features the Tramp as a street musician who falls in love with and saves a gypsy girl forced into slavery by a cruel gypsy chief and his caravan. Chaplin's third Mutual production, it represents an important step in his career, as the film integrates pathos with the comedy.

Strains of *The Vagabond* appear in many of Chaplin's later films. The film's ambiguous ending regarding Charlie's future with the girl foreshadows Charlie's future relationship with Jackie Coogan in *The Kid* (1921). The cruel gypsy chief is the precursor of the cruel stepfather of *The Circus* (1928). The scenes



in the film of Charlie as the violinist (particularly Charlie, in a musical frenzy, falling into a tub of water) anticipate *Limelight* (1952). *The Vagabond* clearly shows Chaplin's development of the film elements that he employed throughout his career, particularly the blending of comedy and drama.

Chaplin's last four Mutual-Chaplin Specials are among his finest works. While each of the preceding Mutual comedies took approximately one month each to make, Chaplin took more time with the last four (ten months in total), which extended his 12-month contract to approximately 18 months. For *Easy Street*, his ninth film for Mutual and the most famous of the 12, Chaplin ordered the first of the T-shaped street sets to be built that he used thereafter as a perfect backdrop to his comedy. The look and feel of *Easy Street* evoke the South London of his childhood (the name "Easy Street" suggests "East Street," the street of Chaplin's birthplace). Poverty, starvation, drug addiction, and urban violence—subjects that foreshadow the social concerns in his later films—are interwoven in to what critic Walter Kerr called "an exquisite short comedy" and "humor encapsulated in the regular rhythms of light verse." In *Easy Street*, the Tramp is reformed in a local mission and makes a fresh start as a police officer, but his beat is the toughest section of the city, which is menaced by a big bully.

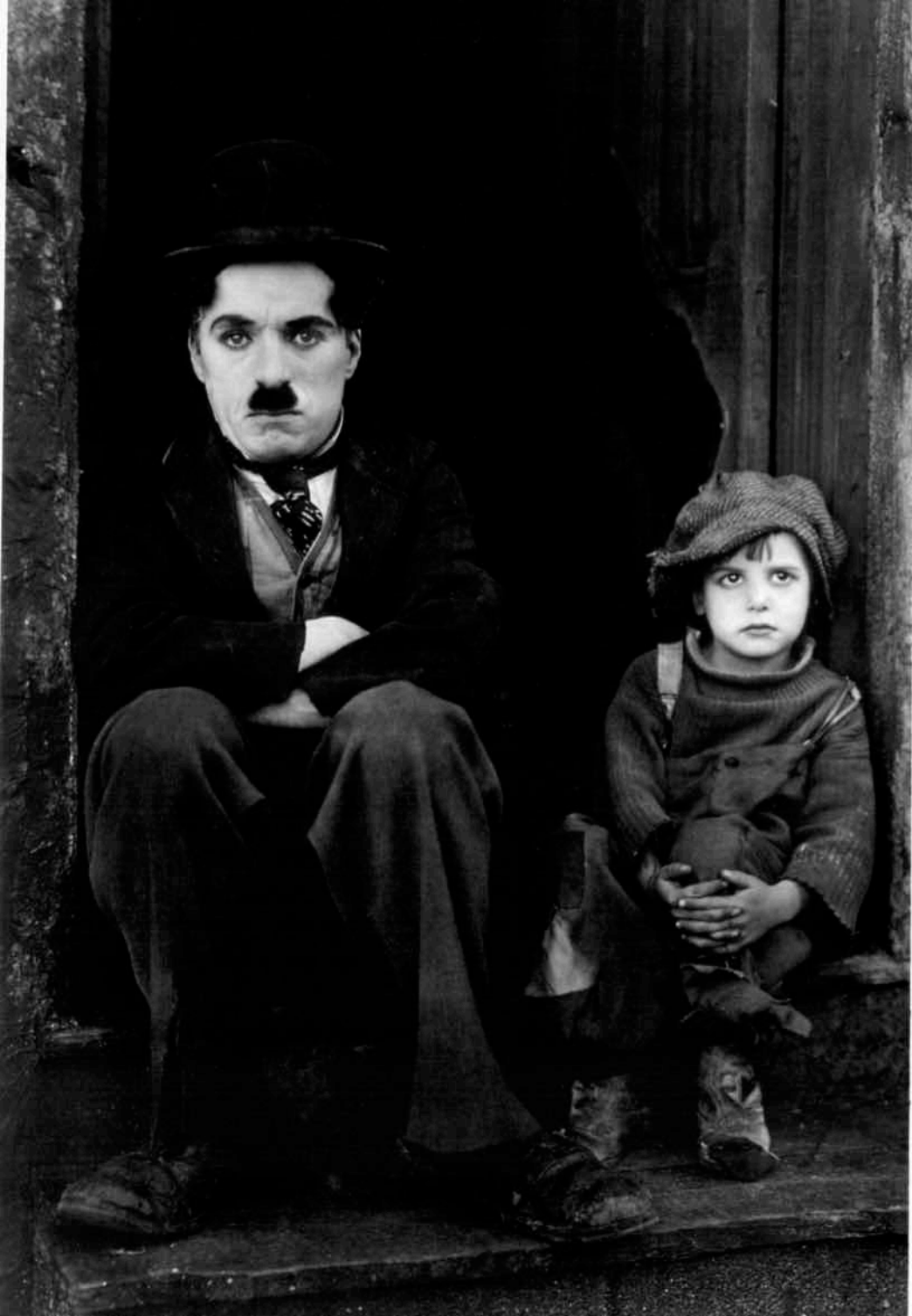
The Cure, the tenth film in the series, is perhaps the funniest of the Mutual-Chaplin Specials. The Fred Karno sketch, *The Hydro*, set in a hydrotherapy clinic, partly inspired its setting. Chaplin drew further

inspiration from the Los Angeles Athletic Club where he was living at the time and where the idea of a health spa first occurred to him. The wrestling bouts in the gymnasium of the Athletic Club captured Chaplin's imagination and inspired the famous scene in which Charlie wrestles the masseur.

Chaplin delayed the completion of the film because of his quest for perfection. Outtakes survive showing that the film began quite differently, with Chaplin intending to play a bellman and later a spa attendant in a health resort before settling on the inebriate character taking the water cure. Chaplin further delayed production when he caught a chill after filming some of the water scenes.

Chaplin's use of dance in *The Cure* recalls the *tableaux vivants*, a popular feature of many British music-hall programs. In the changing room, Charlie assumes several poses in his swimsuit as the curtains open and close before he dances to the pool.

Chaplin wrote in his autobiography, "Fulfilling the Mutual contract, I suppose, was the happiest period in my career. I was light and unencumbered, 27 years old, with fabulous prospects and a friendly, glamorous world before me." Chaplin had such fondness for the Mutual-Chaplin Specials because, in many ways, the films served as a foundation for all that followed in his remarkable career. Chaplin's prior films, although wonderful in their time, failed to display the cinematic genius that came to be called Chaplinesque—the blending of comedy, pathos, and social commentary into a single narrative whole.



THE KID

Accompanied by Timothy Brock conducting the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra

Program introduced by Jeffrey Vance

Directed by Charles Chaplin, USA, 1921

Cast Charles Chaplin (Tramp), Edna Purviance (Woman), Carl Miller (Man), Jackie Coogan (Kid), Tom Wilson (Police officer), Charles F. Riesner (Big bully), Lillita MacMurray (Flirting angel) **Production** Charlie Chaplin Film Company/First National Exhibitors' Circuit **Producer** Charles Chaplin **Scenario** Charles Chaplin **Photography** Roland H. Totheroh **Editor** Charles Chaplin **Production Designer** Charles D. Hall **Assistant Director** Charles F. Riesner

Preceded by KID AUTO RACES AT VENICE, CAL.
Accompanied by Jon Mirsalis on piano

If the 12 Mutual-Chaplin Specials of 1916–1917 served as Chaplin's early comedic laboratory, the best of the films he created for the First National Exhibitors' Circuit reveal a filmmaker growing into his full artistic power. The First Nationals contain some of Chaplin's best constructed and most loved films. Chaplin's screen character becomes gentler, the supporting roles are less caricatured and more textured, and the plots and settings are more realistic. Charlie is just as graceful as he was in the Mutuals, but far less frenetic. Most important, Charlie develops his artistic soul during this period, particularly with *The Kid*. The films may evoke less continuous laughter than the Mutuals, but Chaplin courageously eschewed easy laughs to allow greater development of character and plot in his bold strides toward cinematic maturity.

Chaplin's fifth film for First National, *The Kid*, is one of his finest achievements and remains universally beloved by critics and audiences alike. The film is a perfect blend of comedy and drama and is arguably Chaplin's most personal and autobiographical work. Many of the settings and the themes in the film come right out of Chaplin's own impoverished London childhood. However, it was the combination of two events, one tragic (the death of his infant son) and one joyful (his chance meeting with Jackie Coogan), that led Chaplin to shape the tale of the abandoned child and the lonely Tramp.

The loss of the three-day-old Norman Spencer undoubtedly had a great effect on Chaplin, and the emotional pain appears to have triggered his creativity, as he began auditioning child actors at the Chaplin Studios ten days after his son's death. It was during this period that Chaplin encountered a four-year-old child performer named Jackie Coogan at the Orpheum Theater in Los Angeles, where his father had just performed an eccentric dance act. Chaplin spent more than an hour talking to Jackie in the lobby of the Alexandria Hotel, but the idea of using Jackie in a film did not occur to him. After he heard that Roscoe Arbuckle had just signed Coogan, Chaplin agonized over his missed opportunity. Later, he discovered that Arbuckle had signed Jack Coogan—the boy's father.

Chaplin soon engaged the young Coogan at \$75 a week and began work on *The Kid*, which had the working title *The Waif*. Chaplin later remembered: "All children

in some form or another have genius; the trick is to bring it out in them. With Jackie it was easy. There were a few basic rules to learn in pantomime and Jackie very soon mastered them. He could apply emotion to the action and action to the emotion, and could repeat it time and time again without losing the effect of spontaneity."

As early as 1915, Chaplin had attempted interweaving feature-length comedy with dramatic sequences in the proposed film *Life*, but Essanay forced him to discard that project. *The Kid* afforded Chaplin the opportunity to test his hypothesis that such an effort would be artistically and commercially viable. *The Kid* was Chaplin's first feature-length production (*Tillie's Punctured Romance*, a 1914 Keystone feature, was not directed or produced by him), an ambitious project that spanned six reels, more than an hour of screen time.

In the process of making *The Kid*, Chaplin integrated slapstick comedy with dramatic sequences for the first time in a feature film comedy—a pattern he followed and developed for the rest of his career. In *My Autobiography*, Chaplin wrote: "There had been satire, farce, realism, naturalism, melodrama and fantasy, but raw slapstick and sentiment, the premise of *The Kid*, was something of an innovation."

Chaplin began filming on July 31, 1919 (filming ended on July 30, 1920 and all post-production work finished on December 29, 1920), Chaplin spent \$500,000 and devoted 18 months to *The Kid*, which

was shot at and around his Hollywood studio as well as on locations in Los Angeles, Universal City, Pasadena, Eagle Rock, and Occidental College. Whether the artistic desire to film a retelling of his own childhood struck Chaplin the moment he signed Jackie Coogan, or whether his path to inspiration followed a more subtle evolution, Chaplin soon found himself filming his own youth.

The angel dream sequence has been criticized as incongruous with the rest of the film. Chaplin recalled being disappointed when British author and playwright James M. Barrie, the king of whimsy, told him the sequence was entirely unnecessary, to which Chaplin frankly responded that Barrie's own play, *A Kiss for Cinderella*, had influenced him.

To play the flirting angel, Chaplin cast 12-year-old Lillita MacMurray, whom the director hired again (and gave her the professional moniker Lita Grey) as the leading lady for *The Gold Rush* when she was 15. Early in the production of *The Gold Rush*, she dropped out of the film to wed Chaplin in a marriage that brought him more unhappiness than his previous marriage to Mildred Harris.

The scene in which Jackie is taken away from Charlie is undoubtedly the most celebrated sequence in *The Kid*. Charlie and Jackie wage a heroic struggle (including Jackie wielding a hammer as if it were a mallet) against the orphanage officials who easily vanquish them. Jackie is forced into the back of a truck and begins to plead to be returned to his father. A

careful viewer can read his quivering lips begging, "I want my Daddy!" and "Oh, please!" as he clasps his hands in prayer and looks to heaven for divine intervention. It is a powerful, raw performance, which has lost none of its emotion with time. The officials soon drive Jackie away, another unfortunate stray plucked from the dirty streets. Chased by a police officer, Charlie performs an innovative and desperate race to the rescue as he trips across the rooftops in his frantic attempt to free Jackie from the authorities. The climax of the scene, second only in emotional impact to

the final moments of *City Lights* (1931), finds the Tramp fiercely beating back the officials and reclaiming his child. As the Tramp kisses the trembling boy on the lips, tears of joy, relief, and exhaustion stream down both their faces. It is a high point in cinema history.

As the filming of *The Kid* progressed, Chaplin quickly developed a close friendship with Jackie Coogan that assumed paternal overtones. In many ways, young Jackie had replaced the child Chaplin had just lost. Pairing the Tramp with a



child also gave Chaplin an opportunity to extend the childlike innocence of his own character. As Chaplin explained 50 years later, Coogan was the perfect actor for Chaplin because "[h]e was so malleable."

The late Victorian setting of *The Kid* clearly reflects the London of Chaplin's youth, particularly the attic room at 3 Pownall Terrace where Chaplin had lived. In *My Life in Pictures*, Chaplin wrote of the garret the Tramp and the Kid shared: "A set means so much to me. I think myself into a thing

and whatever comes out has been influenced a great deal by environment. This room was based to a large extent on the places in Lambeth and Kennington where Sydney and I had lived with our mother when we were children. Perhaps that's why the film had some truth."

When production of *The Kid* was completed, Chaplin—like his character in the film—was forced to flee California with the negative of *The Kid* in an effort to thwart Mildred Harris's legal attempts to attach

the film in her divorce settlement. In the early morning hours of August 1920, Chaplin asked cameramen Rollie Totheroh and Jack Wilson to pack the 400,000 feet of uncut negative. Totheroh later recalled that the negative, mounted on 200 foot rolls, was packed in coffee tins that were crated. The 12 crates traveled with Totheroh, Wilson, and Chaplin by train to Salt Lake City, Utah, where California community property laws did not apply. They improvised an editing room in a hotel room and made a rough cut of the film, reducing 400,000 feet to 5,300 feet, and previewed it to a Salt Lake City audience to great enthusiasm.

Confident that the film was his finest work to date, he asked for better terms from First National. The company feigned indifference and offered to pay him as if it were three two-reelers. Chaplin then spirited the film to

New York and rented a vacant studio in Bayonne, New Jersey, to complete the editing and laboratory work. Throughout the transcontinental adventure, Chaplin traveled incognito for fear he might be served a subpoena from Mildred's lawyers. After an acrimonious dispute, Chaplin asked for and eventually received from First National an advance of \$1,500,000 and 50 percent of the net profits after the company recouped the advance. Chaplin recalled in his autobiography that by this time First National's "ruthless attitude had so embittered me that it impeded the progress of my work."

The Kid had its world premiere on January 21, 1921, at New York City's Carnegie Hall in a benefit for the Children's Fund of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures. It is the one Chaplin film for which all the reviews were ecstatic. Chaplin later recalled, "The reviews of my pictures have always been mixed. The one *everybody* praised was *The Kid*—and then they went too far, talked about Shakespeare. Well, it wasn't *that*!" Perhaps not Shakespeare, but comparisons to Dickens were appropriate. The *New Statesman* declared Chaplin "is in *The Kid* a man of Dickensian genius."

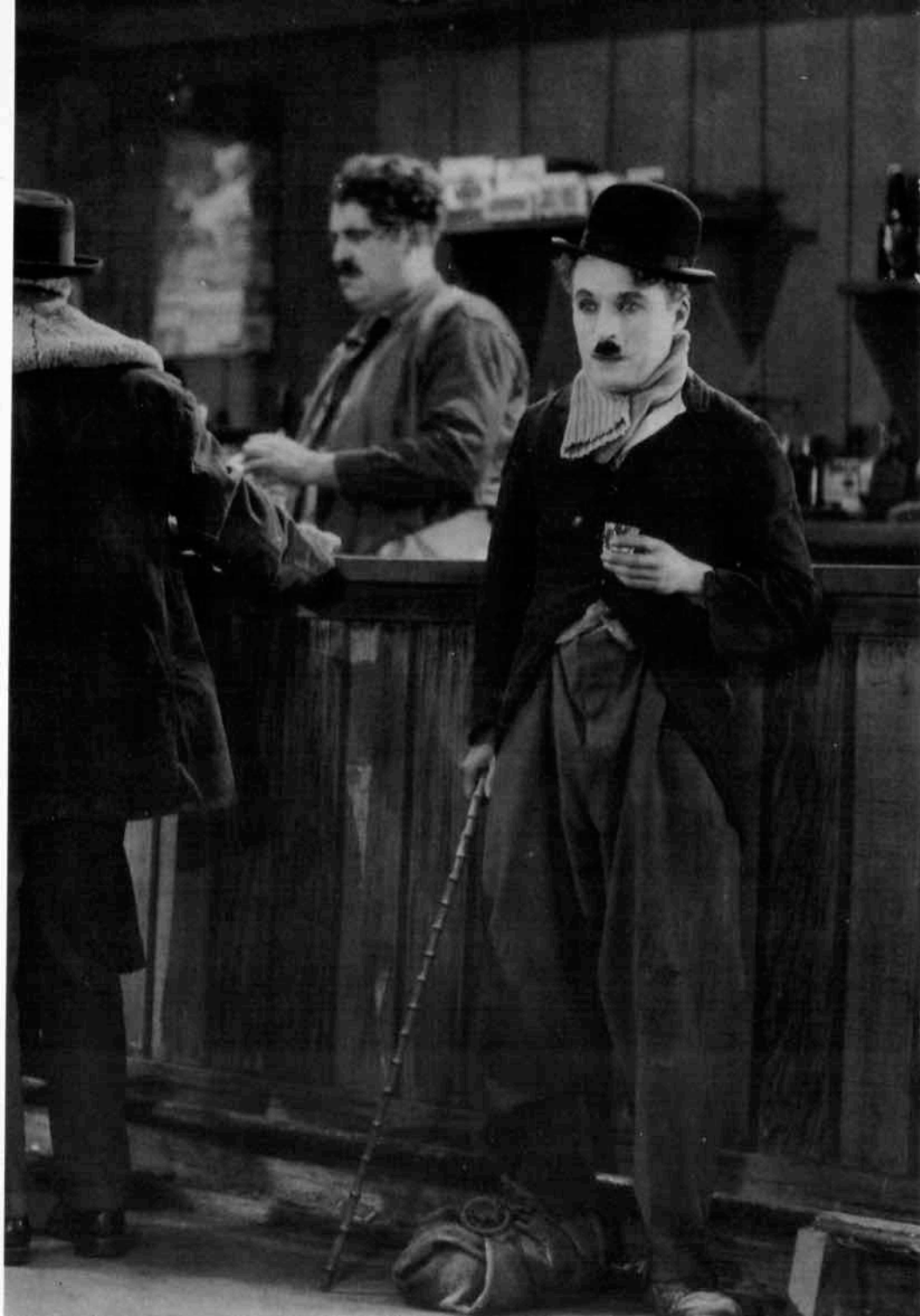
In 1971, Chaplin removed scenes from *The Kid* he thought might appear too sentimental to modern audiences and composed and recorded a musical score for the film's theatrical reissue. It had its debut at the Film Society of Lincoln Center gala tribute to Chaplin, which took place on April 4, 1972, at New York City's Philharmonic Hall, and the 82-year-old

himself was in attendance. It was also in 1972 that Chaplin and Jackie Coogan met for the last time in Beverly Hills, at the Governor's Ball, following Chaplin's receiving an honorary Oscar from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Two conflicting stories circulate about the reunion. One version is that Chaplin greeted Coogan warmly, and as the brief meeting ended, Chaplin emphatically told Coogan's wife, "You must never forget that your husband is a genius." The other account, told by Carol Matthau, wife of actor Walter Matthau and close friend of Oona Chaplin, is that Chaplin first feigned not to recognize Coogan and later expressed concern to Oona that Coogan might ask for residuals. If true, it was a bittersweet ending to a remarkable friendship.

The Kid remains an important contribution to the art of film, not only because of Chaplin's innovative use of dramatic sequences in a feature-length comedy, but also because of the revelations *The Kid* provides about its creator. Undoubtedly, when Chaplin penned the preface to *The Kid*, "A picture with a smile—and perhaps, a tear," he had his own artistic credo, and life, in mind.





THE GOLD RUSH

Accompanied by Timothy Brock conducting the
San Francisco Chamber Orchestra

Program introduced by Jeffrey Vance

Directed by Charles Chaplin, USA, 1925

Cast Charles Chaplin (A Lone Prospector), Mack Swain (Big Jim McKay), Tom Murray (Black Larsen), Malcolm Waite (Jack Cameron), Georgia Hale (Georgia), Henry Bergman (Hank Curtis) **Production** Charles Chaplin Film Corporation/United Artists Corporation **Producer** Charles Chaplin **Scenario** Charles Chaplin **Photography** Roland H. Totheroh **Editor** Charles Chaplin **Production Design** Charles D. Hall **Associate Director** Charles F. Riesner **Assistant Directors** Henri d'Abbadie d'Arrast, A. Edward Sutherland

After the public disappointment of *A Woman of Paris* (1923), a dramatic film in which Chaplin appears only briefly, he was anxious to begin work on his first comedy to be distributed by United Artists. Chaplin was determined to top the phenomenal success of *The Kid*. By any measure, he succeeded. *The Gold Rush* is his greatest and most ambitious silent film; it also was the longest and most expensive comedy film produced up to that time. The film contains many of Chaplin's most celebrated comedy sequences, including the boiling and eating of his boot, the dance of the rolls, and the teetering cabin. However, the superb quality of *The Gold Rush* does not rest solely on its comedy sequences but on these scenes being so fully integrated into a character-driven narrative. Chaplin had no reservations about the finished product. Indeed, in the contemporary publicity for the film, he is

quoted as saying, "This is the picture that I want to be remembered by."

The Gold Rush has an epic quality. The film presents adventures on a grand, heroic scale that are organically united through the central character of the Tramp. The hero-clown survives the cruelty of nature and the villainy of humanity through his luck, pluck, and enterprise. Chaplin's theme for the film is the quest for basic human needs—food, money, shelter, acceptance, and love—set in the harsh environment of the Gold Rush. It is no coincidence that the film's setting mirrors the materialistic 1920s. Human beings endure great hardships in their pursuit of riches in *The Gold Rush*. The Tramp is an outcast in this frozen wasteland of outsiders.

The idea for the film came to Chaplin in late 1923 while looking at some stereograph pictures of the Klondike Gold Rush at Pickfair, the home of Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks. The image that particularly intrigued him showed a long line of prospectors climbing up the Chilkoot Pass—the gateway to the gold fields—in the Klondike River district of the Yukon. Further inspiration came from reading a book about the Donner Party. (In 1846, George Donner and his group of pioneers became snowbound in the Sierra Nevada range while emigrating to California. The privations were such that many resorted to eating the corpses, cowhides, and moccasins of their fallen comrades). Chaplin was adept at creating comedy from unlikely themes (urban poverty in *Easy Street* and the First World War in *Shoulder Arms*); pointing out the humor in tragedy was one

of his great gifts. As Chaplin wrote in his autobiography: "In the creation of comedy, it is paradoxical that tragedy stimulates the spirit of ridicule; because ridicule, I suppose, is an attitude of defiance: we must laugh in the face of our helplessness against the forces of nature—or go insane."

One of Chaplin's most celebrated sequences in *The Gold Rush* (and in all his films) finds the Tramp, out of desperate hunger, preparing a Thanksgiving dinner in which he boils his boot and eats it, picking the nails as though they were chicken bones, and twirling the bootlaces about a fork and eating them as though they were spaghetti. The delicate hilarity of the boot becoming food is Chaplin's most outstanding comic transposition gag. The boots and laces used for the scene actually were made of licorice and the nails of hard candy. According to assistant director Eddie Sutherland, Chaplin went through 20 pairs of candy boots during three days and 63 takes to complete the sequence. Lita Grey (Chaplin's second wife) later recalled that both Chaplin and Mack Swain suffered from the laxative effects of eating too much licorice, and work was suspended when both men became indisposed.

Equally celebrated is the "dance of the rolls" sequence, in which Charlie sticks two forks into bread rolls turning them into a pair of legs with booted feet; Chaplin uses his head and upper body as if they were attached to his fork "legs" and deftly performs a little dance routine. Roscoe Arbuckle had used the gag in his two-reel

comedy *The Rough House* (1917). However, Chaplin made the routine famous. As Michel Hazanavicius, the writer-director of the Oscar-winning *The Artist* (2011) observed, "Charlie Chaplin was a great clown, a great stuntman, a great acrobat, a great dancer. The sequence with the bread is like the 'Mona Lisa'—everybody knows it."

The Gold Rush—subtitled "A Dramatic Comedy"—was revolutionary in its use of film comedy to depict a dramatic historic event. Chaplin decided to photograph on location on a scale he had never attempted before. In Truckee, in northern California (not far from where the Donner Party had been snowbound), Chaplin's crew restaged the Chilkoot Pass for the film's opening panorama with hundreds of men on the trail between snow-capped mountains, struggling to climb to the dangerous pass. This large-scale scene was filmed at Donner Summit; the Truckee ski club had cleared the path for the single-file trudge. Eddie Sutherland had arranged for 600 men to be brought from Sacramento as extras, augmented by every available member of the cast and crew. It was shot entirely in one day and remains one of the most spectacular scenes of silent-film comedy. The Chilkoot Pass opening of *The Gold Rush* helped give the film the epic quality of the stereograph that first inspired Chaplin at Pickfair.

The Gold Rush was 17 months in the making with 235 days of actual filming. The production was not only elaborate but turbulent; production halted for three months when Lita Grey—the original leading lady—became pregnant and was replaced by Georgia Hale. The entire production cost \$923,886.45, making *The Gold Rush* the most expensive comedy of the silent-film era. More than 230,000 feet of film were exposed (on one camera). In post-production, Chaplin spent nine weeks—from April 20, 1925, to the day of the world premiere in Hollywood on June 26, 1925—editing the film to a length under 10,000 feet.

At its premiere engagements at the Mark Strand Theatre in New York City, the Tivoli Theatre in London (where BBC radio broadcast ten minutes of laughter recorded during a showing of the film), the Salle Marivaux in Paris, and elsewhere throughout the world, *The Gold Rush* proved to be one of Chaplin's greatest critical and commercial successes. At the Berlin premiere, the audience gave the "dance of the rolls"

scene such a thunderous ovation that the management instructed the projectionist to rewind the scene and present an immediate encore. Similar incidents were reported elsewhere.

Chaplin reissued *The Gold Rush* in 1942, giving the film a soundtrack of his own musical score and sound effects, with spoken commentary replacing the original intertitles. He also edited the film and inserted a few extra shots to help continuity. Chaplin rearranged some sequences and discarded several scenes, reshaping his 1925 original in an effort to "modernize" the film. The silent version of *The Gold Rush* was reconstructed (Chaplin did not preserve the film's original 1925 cut) in 1993 by the film historians and filmmakers Kevin Brownlow and David Gill.

Writer and critic Alexander Woollcott famously wrote of Chaplin's screen persona: "It must be said of Charles Chaplin that he has created only one character, but that one, in his matchless courtesy, in his unfailing gallantry—his preposterous innocent gallantry in a world of gross Goliaths—is the finest gentleman of our time." *The Gold Rush* represents the height of Chaplin's creative powers and popularity as well as the apogee of his creation, the Little Tramp, the most celebrated cinematic character ever created.



CHARLES CHAPLIN BIOGRAPHY

Charles Spencer Chaplin was born April 16, 1889, in London, England, to music-hall performers. Chaplin's father succumbed to alcoholism and an early death. Chaplin's mother struggled to support him and his elder half-brother, Sydney, until her health and mind deteriorated. At the age of ten, Chaplin went to work, first in a clog dance act and later in comic roles. He joined Fred Karno's Speechless Comedians in 1908 and, while on tour in America as a Karno star player, was offered a contract by the Keystone Film Company, headed by pioneer film comedy producer Mack Sennett.

Chaplin's first film was *Making a Living* (1914). He was first seen as the Little Tramp character in his second Keystone release, *Kid Auto Races at Venice, Cal.* (1914), and was soon writing and directing his own films. In one year at Keystone, he appeared in more than 35 films—all of which were split-reel, one-reel, or two-reel shorts with the exception of *Tillie's Punctured Romance* (1914), Hollywood's first feature-length slapstick comedy.

Chaplin then left Keystone for the Essanay Film Manufacturing Company. At Essanay, Chaplin made 14 films, including *The Tramp* (1915), before joining the Mutual Film Corporation, where he made 12 outstanding two-reel comedies. "The Mutual-Chaplin Specials," produced in 1916–1917, included key works such as *The Vagabond* (1916) and *Easy Street* (1917). Chaplin built his own studio in Hollywood and released films through First

National, where he made the celebrated *Shoulder Arms* (1918) and his first feature-length film, *The Kid* (1921). In 1919, in partnership with Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and D.W. Griffith, Chaplin formed United Artists. Chaplin was now his own distributor, as well as his own writer, director, producer, and star. Among Chaplin's classic feature-length films are *A Woman of Paris* (1923), *The Gold Rush* (1925), *The Circus* (1928), *City Lights* (1931), *Modern Times* (1936), *The Great Dictator* (1940), *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947), and *Limelight* (1952).

While en route to Britain for the world premiere of *Limelight*, Chaplin's re-entry permit to the United States was rescinded on allegations relating to his morals and politics. Chaplin settled in Corsier, near Vevey, Switzerland, in 1953 with his fourth wife Oona, and their growing family. He made two films in self-imposed exile—*A King in New York* (1957) and *A Countess from Hong Kong* (1967)—and published two autobiographical volumes. Chaplin briefly returned to America in 1972 to receive an honorary Oscar from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1975. Sir Charles Chaplin died peacefully at home on Christmas Day, 1977, at the age of 88.

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Program notes by Jeffrey Vance, author of *Chaplin: Genius of the Cinema* (Harry N. Abrams, 2003) and one of the world's foremost authorities on Charles Chaplin.



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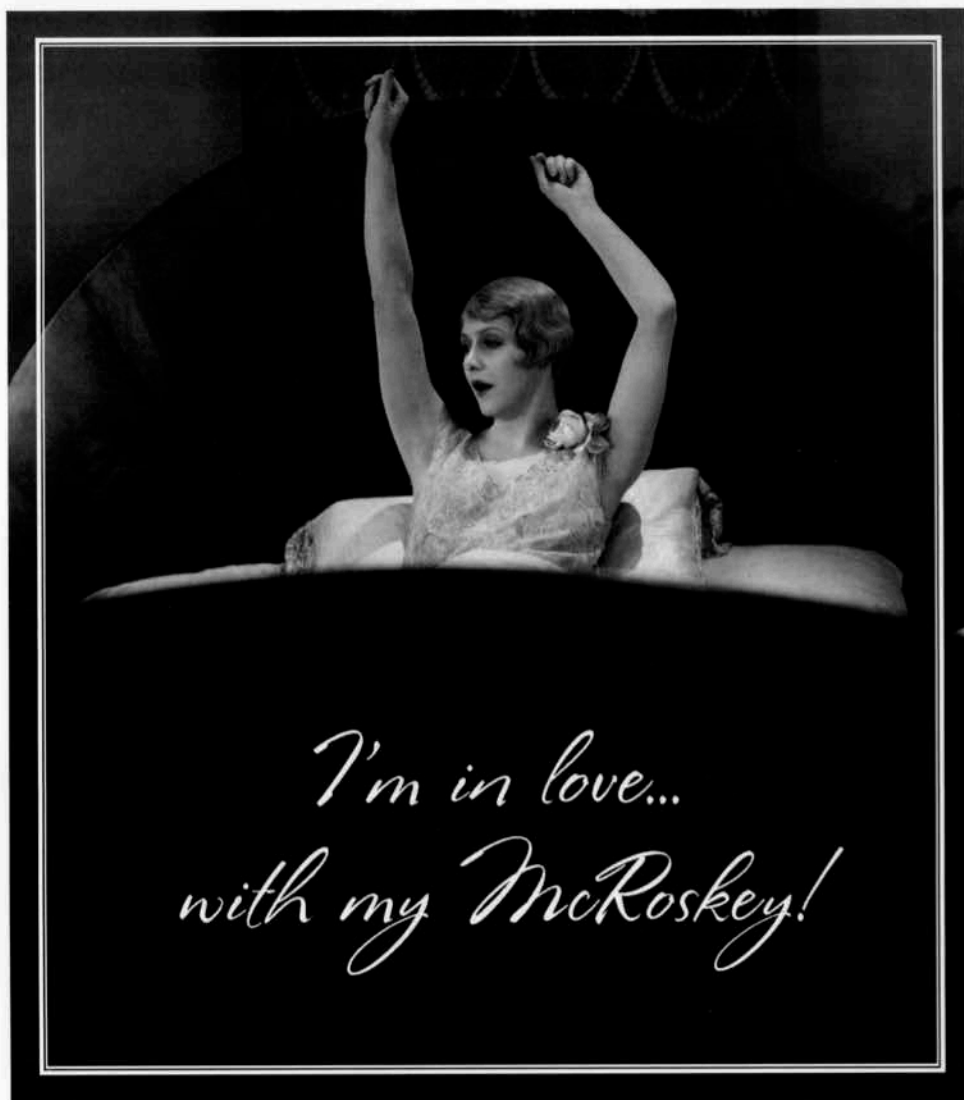
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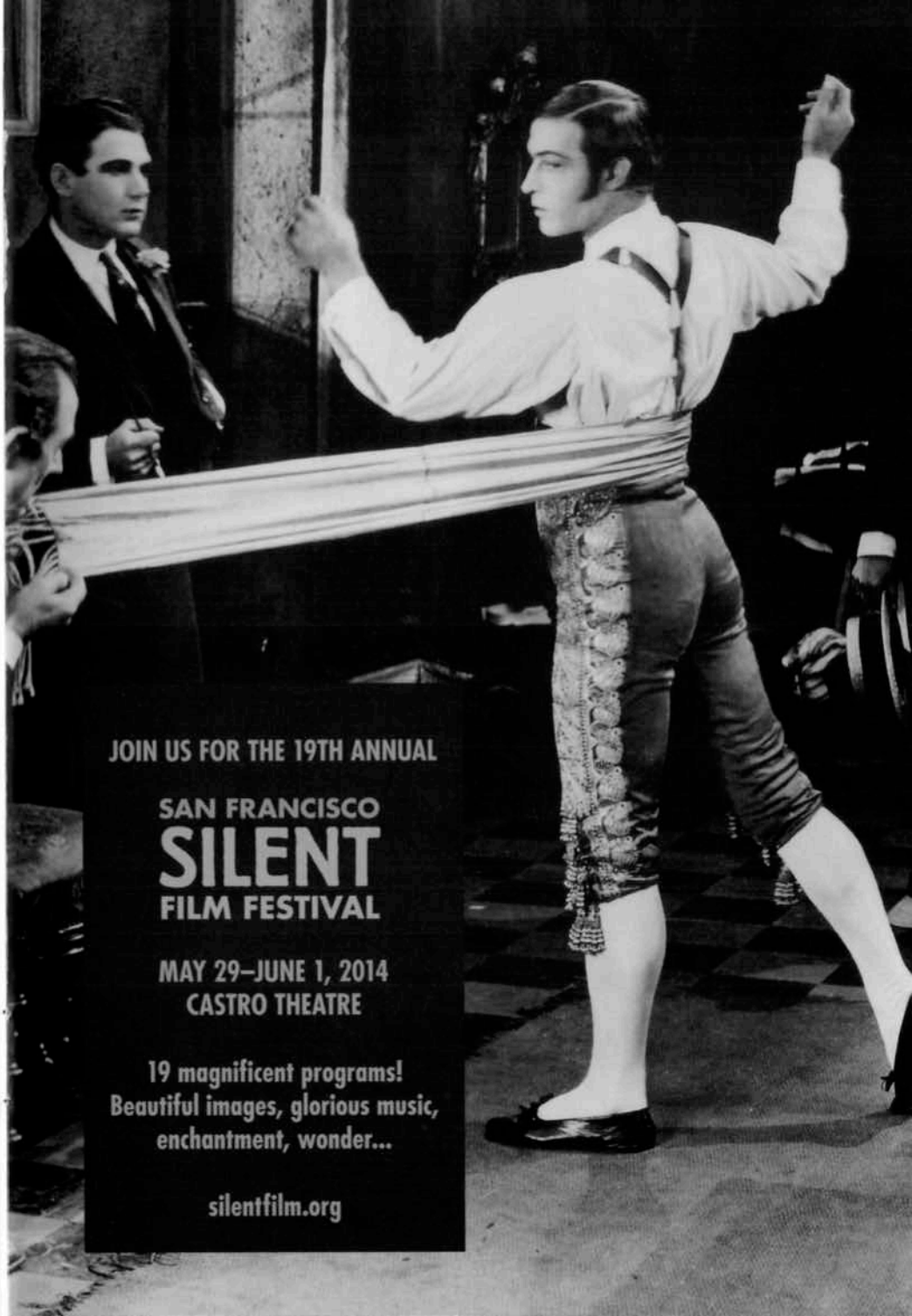
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