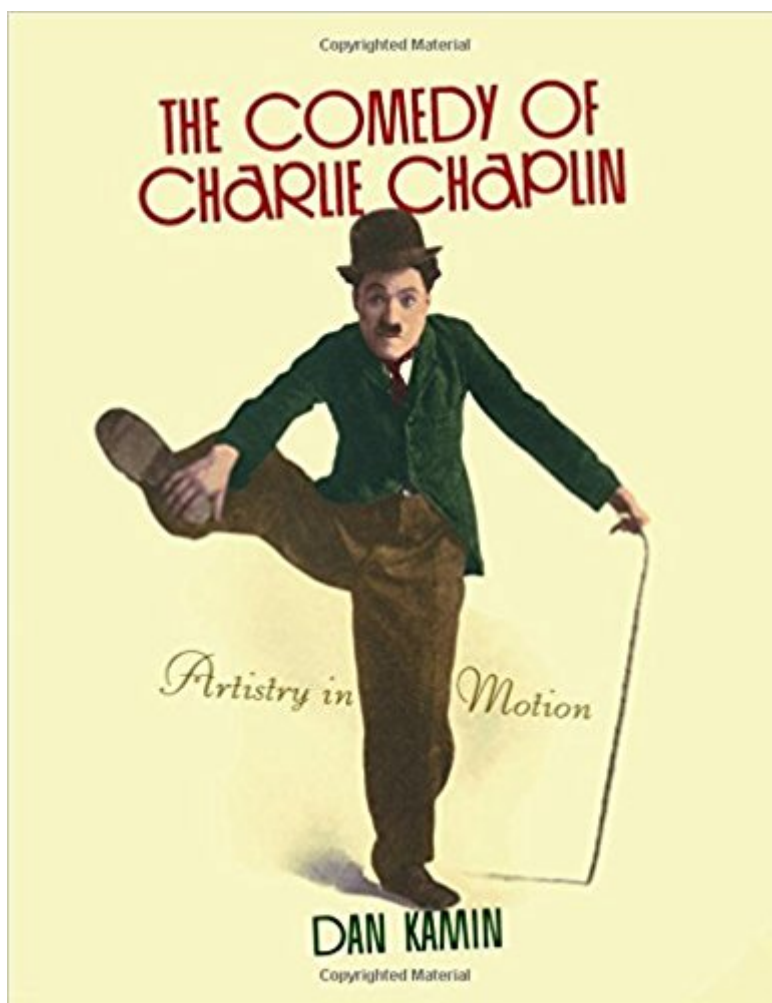


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# The Comedy Of Charlie Chaplin: Artistry In Motion



## Synopsis

From his early shorts in the 1910s through his final film in 1967, Charlie Chaplin's genius embraced many arts: mime, dance, acting, music, writing, and directing. *The Comedy of Charlie Chaplin: Artistry in Motion* examines Chaplin's fusion of these arts in his films, providing new understanding of how movement communicates, how comedy routines are structured, and how stage skills can be translated to the screen. An acclaimed comic performing artist himself, Dan Kamin brings a unique insider's perspective to the subject. He explores how Chaplin's physical virtuosity led him to create the timeless visual comedy that brought silent films to their peak. Kamin uncovers the underlying principles behind the filmmaker's gags, illuminating how Chaplin conjured comedy from the fundamental physical laws of movement. He then presents provocative new interpretations of the comedian's sound films, showing how Chaplin remained faithful to his silent comedy roots even as he kept reinventing his art for changing times. Kamin also offers new insights into how Chaplin achieved rapport with audiences and demonstrates how comedy created nearly a century ago is still fresh today. Lavishly illustrated with many never-before-published images, *The Comedy of Charlie Chaplin* provides the only in-depth analysis of Chaplin as a movement artist and physical comedian. Revealing the inner working of Chaplin's mesmerizing art, this book will appeal not just to Chaplin fans but to anyone who loves comedy. This paperback edition features an annotated bibliography and a foreword by Scott Eyman, author of *Empire of Dreams: The Epic Life of Cecil B. DeMille* and *Print the Legend: The Life and Times of John Ford*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Kamin has deciphered the magic that was Chaplin—the poetry and eloquence of the movement ...There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of books and other materials concerning the life and films of Chaplin. Kamin takes a new approach...excellent. (Library Journal)Anyone who cares about Charlie Chaplin should dive into this excellent book. Kamin is both passionate and articulate, and offers thoughtful new interpretations of his work. (Leonard Maltin)The Comedy of Charlie Chaplin: Artistry in Motion, is no mere book. It's an autopsy. [Kamin] slices and dices the Tramp, picks his brain, looks into his heart and performs the most conclusive examination yet into why this guy, who would've been 120 had he not expired on Christmas Day 1977, is still so funny.

Kamin is the go-to guy for all things Chaplin and slapstick—the man who trained Robert Downey Jr. for his Oscar-nominated starring role in Chaplin in 1992. He then created Johnny Depp's physical comedy sequences for Benny and Joon in 1993. Depp was nominated for a Golden Globe—if anybody has unlocked the secrets of physical comedy, it's Kamin, who even created the Martian movement for Tim Burton's Mars Attacks! (Springfield News-Sun)A well-known Chaplin aficionado and authority, Kamin is also—unlike almost everyone else who writes about him—a talented performer who has studied and absorbed the physicality of the Great Man. (You can see samples of him at work on YouTube.) He helped develop Johnny Depp's pantomime routines for Benny & Joon, and even coached Robert Downey, Jr. on how to walk like Charlie for his performance in Chaplin. This profusely illustrated book expands upon and supersedes his earlier work, Charlie Chaplin's One-Man Show, and attempts to analyze the nature, and genius, of Chaplin's work. Yet Kamin writes clearly and sensibly: “Isolating scenes makes it easy to see how Chaplin uses the various elements of dance—or, more accurately, the laws of Newtonian physics along with some of the aesthetic principles of dance movement—to conjure comedy from the mundane actions of everyday life. Of course, viewers don't have to recognize the sophisticated underpinnings of his physical comedy to appreciate it, which makes his achievement all the more impressive. Chaplin's highly stylized movement comes to seem so natural that we stop noticing it is stylized. Instead, like a good movie soundtrack, it becomes unobtrusive. Yet dance—in this larger sense—is central to the meaning of Chaplin's films, helping him to define his character and strongly affecting what subject matter he is drawn to. It intertwines with the films' content.” (Leonard Maltin's Movie Fan)What makes Kamin's book so insightful is his hard and well studied knowledge of his

subject. Kamin is an expert on the art of mime and it is from the perspective of Chaplin the mime from his early music hall days of Fred Karno's troupe to his final films that Kamin studies from this perspective. Added to this Dan Kamin trained Robert Downey Jr. on how to move and Chaplin for Richard Attenborough's 1992 biopic. This book by Scarecrow Press and originally published in 2008 is brilliantly illustrated with selected stills from his films, sometimes several frames from the same film illustrating Chaplin's movements and comic timing complementing the text. In summary this splendid book would convince anyone not converted to Chaplin why he was heralded as he was and what gives him such a raised status. (Filmwerk) This is . . . a book that will be treasured by Chaplin fans. (RALPH: The Review of Arts, Literature, Philosophy, and the Humanities) Dan Kamin's tome, *The Comedy of Charlie Chaplin: Artistry in Motion*, is something different altogether. It is an examination of Chaplin's art, focusing on what made his films so compelling to audiences of the time and what continues to make his work captivating to new generations experiencing his silent films in the modern era. This is not merely a film study. It is a study of Chaplin's performances and the way he used the motions of his body to create timeless comedy. The author is uniquely qualified to analyze and break down Chaplin's body movements, as Dan Kamin is a professional comedian and mime who developed the physical comedy sequences for the films *Chaplin* (1992) and *Benny and Joon* (1993) and who trained both Robert Downey Jr. and Johnny Depp for their roles. Through Mr. Kamin's in-depth analysis of Chaplin's body movements, *The Comedy of Charlie Chaplin: Artistry in Motion* had an effect on me that no other book on Chaplin and his films has produced – it made me look at the comedian's work in a new way.... Mr. Kamin's book provides new insight into Chaplin's compelling performances.... I found *The Comedy of Charlie Chaplin: Artistry in Motion* to be the best examination of Charlie Chaplin's art in book form. It receives my highest recommendation. (It Came From The Bottom Shelf!) Kamin has devoted his life to understanding and internalizing physical comedy in general and Chaplin in particular, and it shows. His grasp of Chaplin is peerless, and he is also skilled with words. (James M. Welsh *Journal of American Culture*) Dan Kamin's new book, *The Comedy of Charlie Chaplin: Artistry in Motion*, is something different altogether. It is an examination of Chaplin's art, focusing on what made his films so compelling to audiences of the time and what continues to make his work captivating to new generations experiencing his silent films in the modern era. The author is uniquely qualified to analyze and break down Chaplin's body movements, as Dan Kamin is a professional comedian and mime... *The Comedy of Charlie Chaplin* will also be of great interest to soused cinema enthusiasts, because Mr. Kamin delves deeper than

previous authors into Chaplin's soused slapstick. Fans of "booze movies" and lovers of film comedy should consider Dan Kamin's book an essential read. It receives my highest recommendation. (Soused Cinema Library Blog) Dan Kamin's *The Comedy of Charlie Chaplin* is indispensable. Its detailed, penetrating analysis of the how and why of Chaplin's body language reveals the craft behind the art of the greatest clown of them all. (Scott Eyman, book editor of *The Palm Beach Post*, co-author of *Robert Wagner's Pieces of My Heart: A Life*) Dan's insights are amazing. He's probably the foremost authority on Chaplin...there was really no scene [in Chaplin] that he didn't help me with. (Robert Downey Jr.)

From his early shorts in the 1910s through his final film in 1967, Charlie Chaplin's genius embraced many arts--mime, dance, acting, music, writing, and directing. *The Comedy of Charlie Chaplin: Artistry in Motion* examines Chaplin's fusion of these arts in his films, providing new understanding of how movement communicates, how comedy routines are structured, and how stage skills can be translated to the screen. An acclaimed comic performing artist himself, Dan Kamin brings a unique insider's perspective to the subject. He explores how Chaplin's physical virtuosity led him to create the timeless visual comedy that brought silent films to their peak. Kamin uncovers the underlying principles behind the filmmaker's gags, illuminating how Chaplin conjured comedy from the fundamental physical laws of movement. He then presents provocative new interpretations of the comedian's sound films, showing how Chaplin remained faithful to his silent comedy roots even as he kept reinventing his art for changing times. Kamin also offers new insights into how Chaplin achieved rapport with audiences and demonstrates how comedy created nearly a century ago is still fresh today. Lavishly illustrated with many never-before-published images, *The Comedy of Charlie Chaplin* provides the only in-depth analysis of Chaplin as a movement artist and physical comedian. Revealing the inner working of Chaplin's mesmerizing art, this book will appeal not just to Chaplin fans but to anyone who loves comedy. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Only a performer who is a movement artist can truly appreciate Chaplin. Dan Kamin is the go-to source for understanding Chaplin as an artist. There are a few other good books, but they're all written from the outside looking in. Not this one. *ÅfÅçÅ â -Å â* •John Towsen, [physicalcomedy.blogspot.com](http://physicalcomedy.blogspot.com)

Reason for purchasing was for English class. I will for ever be grateful to my teacher to introducing

me to Charlie!! Must read book before watching any Chaplin films!!

Great book with a unique look at Chaplin's artistry. Many books look at Chaplin's personal life, but this book dissects and studies the scenes that, put together, form very impressive entertainment that continues to impress audiences nearly 100 years later.

This is by far the greatest book on Chaplin I have ever read! It's the only one that i've been able to find which covers his art in such detail.

Great product delivered quickly.

Kamin writes as fluidly as Chaplin moves. The Comedy of Charlie Chaplin is meticulously footnoted and based on Kamin's painstaking observations of Chaplin's work, something that could have resulted in a stultifying finished product. Kamin's genuine affection for and appreciation of Chaplin makes the text lively, and Kamin does well at keeping his chapters tightly-focused, rather than sprawling with enthusiasm. I enjoy Chaplin's art a great deal on lots of levels, from visceral to intellectual, but his technique has always been a mystery to me. Kamin, a mime as well as a scholar, sheds light on the fascinating intricacies of Chaplin's use of posture, movement, comedic structure, and (occasionally) film tricks to create work that, while rooted in tradition, was and still is unlike anyone else's. Although honest about Chaplin's flaws as a director, Kamin actually explodes popular misconceptions about Chaplin--that he didn't understand or use advanced film-making technology, or that he kept his camera static--and sheds light on historical film production in the process. It took me five months to read The Comedy of Charlie Chaplin, not because it was dull or unpleasant, but because it was so good that I couldn't believe it wouldn't suddenly become awful once I turned the page. It never got awful. Even the chapters about Chaplin's last films were written with honesty and sensitivity, a combination many authors find elusive when approaching this subject. There's a lot about Chaplin out there, but Kamin's book is a wonderful addition to the existing literature, and it also has the benefit of being an enjoyable read.

There have been dozens of books written about filmdom's first megastar, Charlie Chaplin, from Chaplin's own MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY to Walter Kerr's landmark study of silent film comedy, THE SILENT CLOWNS, to David Robinson's definitive biography, CHAPLIN: HIS LIFE AND ART, to Jeffrey Vance's beautiful coffee table book, CHAPLIN: GENIUS OF THE CINEMA. While these

books and many others have been excellent, they tend to fall into two basic categories--biographies or film studies. Dan Kamin's new book, *THE COMEDY OF CHARLIE CHAPLIN: ARTISTRY IN MOTION*, is something different altogether. It is an examination of Chaplin's art, focusing on what made his films so compelling to audiences of the time and what continues to make his work captivating to new generations experiencing his silent films in the modern era. This is not merely a film study. It is a study of Chaplin's performances and the way he used the motions of his body to create timeless comedy. The author is uniquely qualified to analyze and break down Chaplin's body movements, as Dan Kamin is a professional comedian and mime who developed the physical comedy sequences for the films *CHAPLIN* (1992) and *BENNY AND JUNE* (1993) and who trained both Robert Downey Jr. and Johnny Depp for their roles. Through Mr. Kamin's in-depth analysis of Chaplin's body movements, *THE COMEDY OF CHARLIE CHAPLIN: ARTISTRY IN MOTION* had an effect on me that no other book on Chaplin and his films has produced--it made me look at the comedian's work in a new way. Just as the outtakes presented in the Kevin Brownlow and David Gill's breakthrough documentary *UNKNOWN CHAPLIN* provided a new understanding into the way Chaplin improvised and directed his films, Mr. Kamin's book provides new insight into the comedian's compelling performances. Of course, the book is much more than a detailed examination of Chaplin's movements. It also features coverage of the comedian's theatrical work and how he utilized and adapted his stage training when entering the movies, a detailed examination of the comedian's gags (including a breakdown of eight specific categories of Chaplin's signature transformation gags in which he treats one thing as another), a look at the comedian's evolving character and the changing cast of characters that surrounded him as his films became more mature, an extensive analysis of how Chaplin dealt with the problem of adapting his comedy to the new medium of sound films, and a brief overview of the challenges Mr. Kamin encountered in trying to train Robert Downey Jr. to move like the great comedian for the film *CHAPLIN*. Taken as a whole, I found *THE COMEDY OF CHARLIE CHAPLIN* to be the best examination of Charlie Chaplin's art in book form. While I can find no criticism to level against Mr. Kamin's masterful analysis of Chaplin's art, I have one small gripe when it comes to the book itself. The publisher has chosen to only publish the title in a library-bound edition, which has been priced for the library market. While the book is solidly bound to last beyond a single lifetime and the laminated hardback cover is resistant to spills that would damage books made of lesser materials, the \$65 price tag may discourage many readers from picking up this beautiful, insightful book. However, since this is a reference that film lovers will want to revisit again and again, the care that went into producing the book is appropriate. I hope that fans of Charlie Chaplin will overlook the hefty cost, because those

that make the investment will find their money well spent. Lovers of film comedy should consider Dan Kamin's book an essential read. It receives my highest recommendation.

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