


PHILHARMONIE DE PARIS
MUSÉE DE LA MUSIQUE



**THE
SOUND
OF
CHARLIE
CHAPLIN**

EXHIBITION
FROM OCTOBER 11, 2019
TO JANUARY 26, 2020

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It is no paradox to invite the master of silent cinema to the Philharmonie de Paris in autumn 2019. Chaplin's use of music (and more widely, his close relationship with dance, his careful orchestration of rhythm, "pretend" language, and the illusion of sounds) are very exciting ways through which to re-discover his work.



The Tramp in *City Lights*, 1930-1931

A self-taught musician from his teenage years, at 25 Charlie Chaplin switched from the universe of music-hall to that of film. With the invention of his Tramp he confirmed the superiority of pantomime and imposed a musical dimension to the character, rendering him both comic and poetic - a dancing body totally in tune with the rhythm of the film images.

In 1929 when cinema was revolutionized by the arrival of sound, Chaplin seized the opportunity to control the music which would accompany his films. From then on, he added musical composition to his already numerous accomplishments, not only writing scores for all his films to come, but returning to many earlier works to compose soundtracks for them. Deciding against speech for his character in order to retain his poetical comedy, and all above all his universality, he invented instead comic sound in which effects and music bounced off one another.

With many film clips, photographs, artworks, rare documents and interactive installations, the exhibition offers an in-depth vision adapted to visitors of all age- groups, who will be able to explore the life and work of one of the greatest artists of the 20th century through a new light.

CURATION

Curator: Sam Stourdzé

Director of the Rencontres d'Arles photography festival since October 2014, former resident of the Villa Médicis, Sam Stourdzé was previously director of the Musée de l'Élysée in Lausanne, Switzerland. He has published several books and curated many exhibitions including *Fellini, the Great Parade*, and *Chaplin in Pictures*. The latter exhibition has been travelling the world since 2005 and has been presented at the Jeu de Paume in Paris, the Kunsthal in Rotterdam, the Art Museum in Helsinki and the Instituto Tomie Ohtake in São Paulo, Brazil

Associate curator: Mathilde Thibault-Starzyk

Mathilde Thibault-Starzyk holds a degree in art history and museology from the École du Louvre and specializes in the management and documentation of works. She has worked on several exhibitions at the Philharmonie de Paris, including the *Barbara* exhibition as production manager.

Consultant: Kate Guyonvarch

Starting as a bilingual secretary for the Chaplin organization in Paris over thirty-five years ago completely by chance, Kate Guyonvarch has been there ever since and is now managing director of Roy Export S.A.S., the company that owns the films Chaplin made from the time he set up his own studios. Under direction from the Chaplin family she also manages the use of the Chaplin name and image for merchandising purposes for the company Bubbles Incorporated S.A, and oversees the access, conservation and exploitation of the paper and photograph archives and archival film footage from the ex-Chaplin Studios in Los Angeles and the Chaplin family home in Switzerland.

PARTNERS

The exhibition is organized as part of the 130th anniversary of Chaplin's birth with the Chaplin Office, representing Roy Export SAS, the company that holds the rights to Chaplin films made from 1918 onwards, (including the best-known titles such as *The Kid*, *The Gold Rush*, *The Circus*, *City Lights*, *Modern Times*, *The Great Dictator*, *Monsieur Verdoux* and *Limelight*) Roy Export Company Ltd, owner of the Chaplin archives, and the Chaplin family.

The exhibition is also endorsed by Chaplin's World in Corsier-sur-Vevey, Switzerland, where a reduced version of the exhibition was presented in 2020.



EXHIBITION PERSPECTIVE

- Discovery or rediscovery of Chaplin's cinematographic work from the largely unexplored viewpoint of music and rhythm,
- An unexpectedly varied biography of Chaplin seen from a musical angle,
- Audiovisual immersion into inventive film montages appealing to all age groups,
- Some interludes within the story: Carmen, when Chaplin parodies the work of Bizet; the Tramp as seen by avant-garde artists; the amazing longevity of the song "Smile"...
- Interactive devices: testing sound effects and choosing different soundtracks to experiment with the cinema of the time.

DATA SHEET OF THE EXHIBITION

Exhibition in Paris:

- **11 October 2019 – 26 January 2020**
- **800 sqm** of exhibition space

Exhibition in Corsier-sur-Vevey in Chaplin's World:

- **11 March 2020 – 31 August 2020**
- **150 sqm** of exhibition space

Touring exhibition format: flexible

200 original and reproduced artworks exhibited and available for touring including:

- 30 3D objects including rare cameras
- More than 100 photographs, including vintage prints
- 70 documents and rare archives (scores, posters, program)
- About 100 audiovisual extracts

Loans from 15 different sources: Roy Export Ltd., Fondation Seydoux-Pathé, Cinémathèque française...

And many playful installations: jukebox, an interactive device for comparing film clips, puzzles for children, an interactive machine which adds sound effects to silent films...



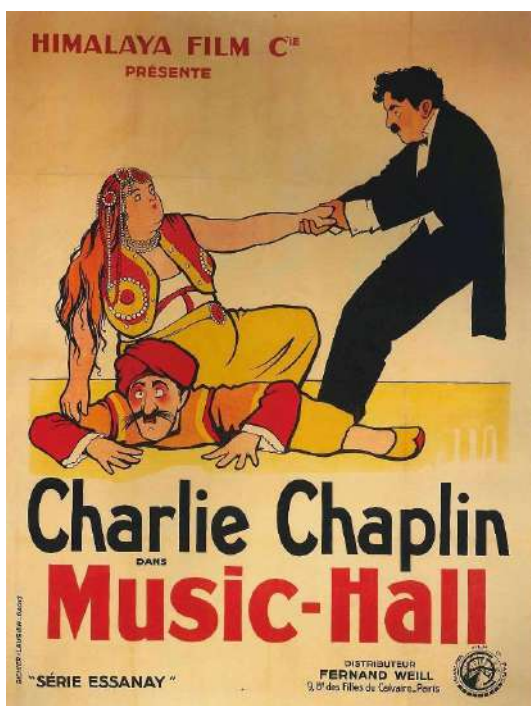
© Roy Export Co. Ltd

Chaplin with a microphone on the set of *City Lights*, circa 1929-1930

THE EXHIBITION

1. IN THE BEGINNING – CHAPLIN AND MUSIC HALL
2. A DANCING FIGURE: THE INVENTION OF THE TRAMP
3. SILENT MOVIES, AN AUDIO ART...
4. CHAPLIN THE COMPOSER
5. CHAPLIN MOCKS THE 'TALKIES'

1. IN THE BEGINNING – CHAPLIN AND THE MUSIC HALL



Poster for *A Night in the Show*, designed by Roberty, printed by Richier-Laugier, Paris, 1915

Born on April 16th, 1889, in a poor part of London, Charlie Chaplin deployed his artistic talents from a very early age. His parents, Charles and Hannah Chaplin, were singers and music-hall artists. Charlie began performing on stage at a very early age and at 18, after many roles in various companies, he was hired by Fred Karno, Britain's leading music hall impresario. The troupe's second tour of the United States would change the course of his life: the young actor was spotted by Mack Sennett, the founder of Keystone Studios.

Chaplin developed on screen the techniques learned on stage and between 1914 and 1917 made more than sixty films. His talent for mime and "slapstick", the form of burlesque comedy very popular in music halls, permeated his early work. The short form gags, the quarrelsome humour, the exaggerated mime and the limited space of the stage were successfully transposed

from music hall to cinema by the young director. Throughout his career Chaplin made many film tributes to the world of cabaret, from *A Night in the Show* (1915) to *Limelight* (1952). In 1915, in response to Cecil B. De Mille's *Carmen*, Chaplin released a film parody of Bizet's opera, and through this hilarious cinematic standpoint and stylistic exercise also referred back to popular and musical theatre.

INCLUDED IN SECTION 1

- A Family of Artists

Discovery of the childhood of the young Charlie Chaplin in London, as well as his half- brother Sydney, and their stage debuts, through photographs, posters and rare documents.

- From Music Hall to The Movies

A tour with Fred Karno took the young Chaplin across the Atlantic: many posters testify to his meteoric rise and his introduction to the cinematographic form.

Screenings: variations around the imaginary world of the music hall in Chaplin's work, and the recurring presence of certain motifs, in particular that of the drunk.

- Carmen

Focus on the little-known confrontation of two Hollywood film celebrities around Bizet's comic opera: Chaplin's *A Burlesque on Carmen* in response to Cecil B. DeMille's *Carmen*.





© Roy Export Co. Ltd

During his first tour of the USA with Fred Karno's troupe, Sacramento, June 5th, 1911

2. A DANCING FIGURE: THE INVENTION OF THE TRAMP

The Tramp with his inimitable gait first appeared in 1914 in *Kid Auto Races at Venice* and just two years later, Chaplin was known all around the world. He had invented a character whose silhouette was instantly recognizable: moustache, hat, cane, baggy pants, over-sized shoes. In his first films, the humour was ferocious, but gradually the cruelty was abandoned in favor of a more poetical Tramp. His comic language was universal since it arose from a body in motion, choreographed like that of a dancer.

The Tramp became a central figure in intellectual and popular culture, occupying an important place in the imagination of artists such as Fernand Léger as the embodiment of a resolutely modern form of art in motion. The dancing body runs through Chaplin's entire work, culminating in some classic scenes, such as the barbershop scene set to Brahms' Hungarian Dance in *The Great Dictator*.



© Roy Export S.A.S

The Tramp and the nymphs in *Sunnyside*, 1919

INCLUDED IN SECTION 2

- The Tramp in Different Disguises

Photo gallery presenting the evolution of the Tramp's various costumes and postures.

- The Dancing Tramp

An immersive audio-visual installation showing how precision of editing and the rhythm of Chaplin's movements give the Tramp his dancing musicality.

- Homage to *Nijinsky*

The meeting between the filmmaker and the Russian choreographer.

- The Tramp in Art

A collection of original works by Fernand Léger paying tribute to the Tramp's choreographic silhouette.

- The Tramp in Art and Popular Culture

Set of objects using the gait and body of the Tramp character as a selling point: the Tramp becomes a product.



© Roy Export S.A.S

The husband found hiding fully clothed in bed by his wife in *The Idle Class*

3. SILENT MOVIES, AN AUDIO ART...

Many short film plots are based around sounds we have the illusion of hearing even though the film is silent. While he could not control the music played in theatres to accompany his films, Chaplin had already given it a place on the screen.

Before the advent of talking pictures in 1927, silent films circulated without soundtracks and it was up to the venues that screened them to draw from their score collections and hire musicians. The film could just as easily be accompanied by a solo pianist or an entire orchestra. However, as the owner of his own studio, Chaplin paid the greatest attention to the musical accompaniment of his films for their premiere such as when *The Gold Rush*, his most ambitious silent film, was released in 1925. The filmmaker orchestrated a genuine communication plan through music.



Left: Chaplin rehearsing with the Abe Lyman Orchestra, 1925; right: Chaplin rehearsing the bread roll dance, in around 1925

With the invention of sound cinema, Chaplin was able not only to take complete control of the music but also compose it. After his compositions for *City Lights* and *Modern Times*, *The Gold Rush* was re-released in 1942, accompanied by a soundtrack with narration and an original score by Chaplin. This was also an opportunity for him to review the film's storyline: almost 20 years after the initial release, Chaplin demonstrated the same high standards, which bore fruit: already acclaimed in the 1920s, the film met with immense success in the 1940s.

INCLUDED IN SECTION 3

- Musical Accompaniment in The Silent Era

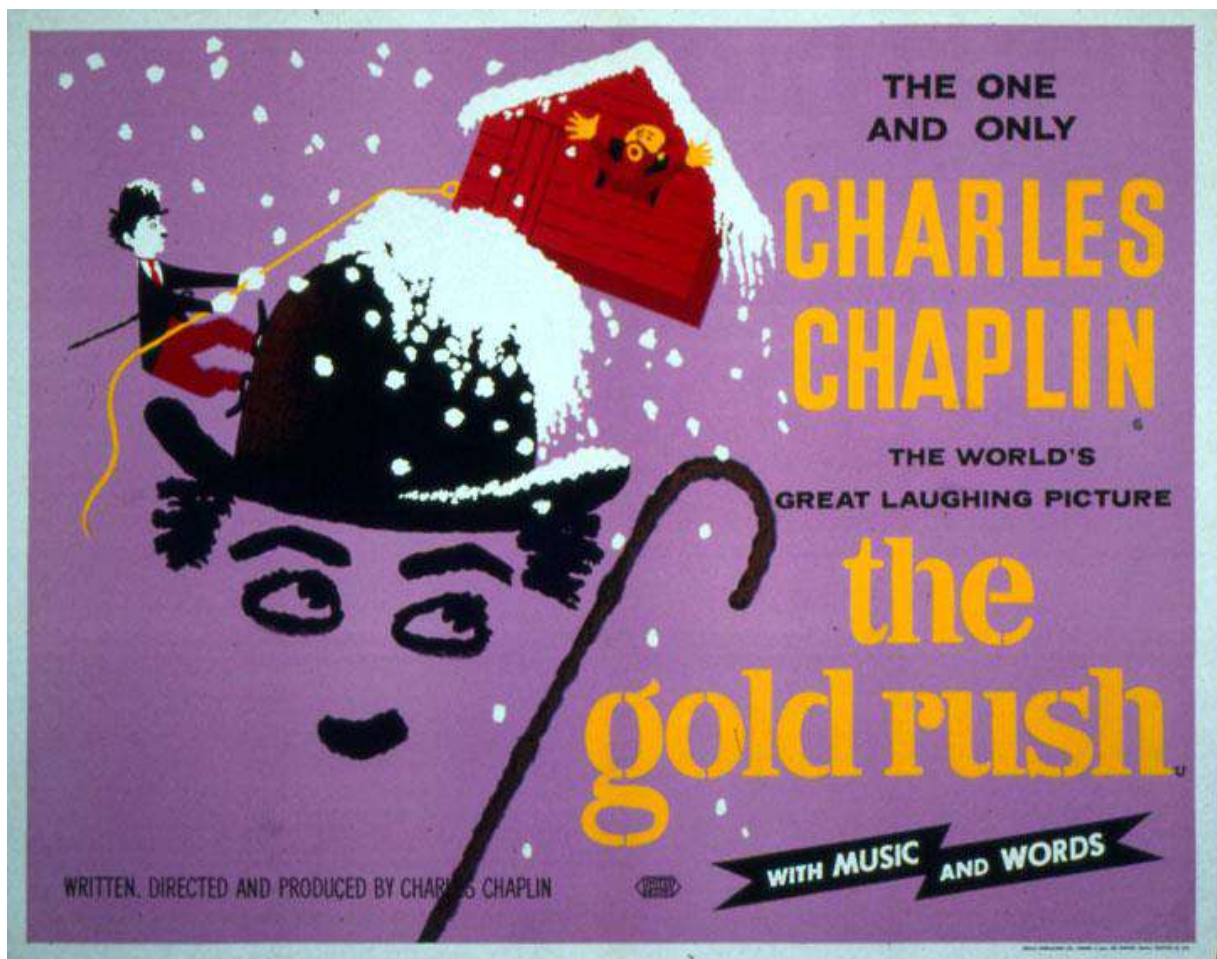
Before sound, music for films: choice of librettos, scores and programs, but also the sound effects machine, including an interactive version for the visitor to try out.

- Sound Without Sound

How did Chaplin symbolize music and sound in his silent films? A montage of excerpts and a selection of photographs.

- *The Gold Rush*, 1925-1942

The saga of *The Gold Rush*: an epic film shoot, the story of the premiere and of the 1942 rerelease with music, including different musical accompaniments for the legendary "Dance of the Rolls".



Poster for reissue of The Gold Rush, 50's

4. CHAPLIN THE COMPOSER

As a young man, Chaplin had learned the violin, piano and cello by ear, and he dreamed of becoming a musician.

"Since the age of sixteen," he wrote, "I had practiced from four to six hours a day in my bedroom. Each week I took lessons from the theatre conductor or from someone he recommended. As I played left-handed, my violin was strung left-handed with the bass bar and sounding post reversed. I had great ambitions to be a concert artist, or, failing that, to use it in a vaudeville act, but as time went on I realized that I could never achieve excellence, so I gave it up."

Shortly after finding success in the movies, Chaplin founded the Charlie Chaplin Music Publishing Company and published a few song scores. Music and the company of musicians became part and parcel of his world.



© Roy Export Co. Ltd

Charles Chaplin on the violin, Gus Arnheim on the piano and Abe Lyman, 1925

From 1931 onwards, Chaplin composed the music for all his films, employing an arranger to write down the melodies he invented as he could not read music. He imposed his touch: music must serve as a charming and elegant counterpoint rather than compete with the comedy of the image. "Elegant music gave my films an emotional dimension". He later wrote scores for many of his earlier silent films when they were rereleased.

He also skillfully quoted major works from the classical repertoire: Rimsky-Korsakov, Wagner, Tchaikovsky; as well as popular titles: "Auld Lang Syne" and "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow", subtly creating complicity with the audience.

Some of his compositions have become classics: "Smile" or "Eternally" have known worldwide success with covers by Michael Jackson, Dalida or Eric Clapton. A world- renowned filmmaker, Chaplin won an Oscar in 1973 for the music of Limelight!

INCLUDED IN SECTION 4

- Chaplin's Musical Relatives

A display bringing together Chaplin's musical affinities - collaborators and musicians - recounting the brief adventure of the Music Publishing Company and presenting Chaplin directing himself as an orchestra conductor...

- Chaplin at Work

Original scores, working documents and unpublished recordings to understand Chaplin's creative process, with, in conclusion, the musical orchestrations of his films.

- Musical Quotations

Through commented film extracts, decoding pre-existing music selected by Chaplin for his films.



© Roy Export Co. Ltd

Charles Chaplin, Sid Grauman and Borrah Minevitch circa 1925

5. CHAPLIN MOCKS THE 'TALKIES'

In 1927, *The Jazz Singer* revolutionized cinema but Chaplin remained wary of taking pictures, aware that his comedy was universal because it was based on gesture, and above all realising that a form of cinema which gave predominance to dialogue would sign the Tramp's death warrant. "I don't think my voice can add to any of my comedies. On the contrary, it would destroy the illusion I want to create, that of a small symbolic comic figure, not a comic character but a humorous idea, a comic abstraction."

It took him three films and almost ten years to move on to talking pictures. Nevertheless, during that time Chaplin managed to develop a very personal conception of the use of language to enrich his cinematic writing and took advantage of the new possibilities available to him to introduce purely sound gags and synchronize his musical accompaniment, inventing a burlesque world of sound. The opening sequence of *City Lights* (1931) sets the tone: squawky sounds, probably from the mouthpiece of a saxophone, are used for the mayor's official speech, parodying the mediocre quality of the dialogue in early talkies. In 1936, when cinema had permanently adopted talking pictures, Chaplin remained bold enough to prevent the Tramp from speaking a specific language in *Modern Times*: the audience heard his voice for the first time but his words were unintelligible because the Tramp had lost the words to the song. "Sing, never mind the words," Paulette Goddard whispers to him !



© Roy Export Co. Ltd

During rehearsals for the speech at the start of *City Lights*, 1

In 1940, *The Great Dictator* ended with the injunction "You must speak". Speech seemed to be a matter of historical urgency, yet Chaplin still retained a certain ambivalence towards articulated language. Hynkel's harangue at the beginning of the film imitated German but deliberately made no sense at all; the tone of the tirade seemed truer than the translation supposed to explain it. On the other hand, in the Jewish barber's final speech Chaplin removed the mask of the Tramp and delivered a passionate message, which left its mark on generations of viewers and artists.



© Roy Export S.A.S

Hynkel's speech at the start of *The Great Dictator*, 1939

INCLUDED IN SECTION 5

- 30 Years of Cameras

Through the cinematographic equipment on display visitors will appreciate the technological revolution that cinema went through in Chaplin's time, before and after talking pictures.

- Chaplin and Talking Pictures

Overview of Chaplin's strident stance in the face of talking pictures via a wall of press cuttings.

- Anthology of Sound Gags

Chaplin subtly introduced sound without words by playing on the synchronization of images and sound effects to reinforce his comedy.

- From The Tramp's Voice to Chaplin's Words

From speeches without words, unintelligible words, to the final speech that closes *The Great Dictator*, screenings of his now legendary speeches.

**CHARLIE CHAPLIN LIVE CONCERTS:
WEEK-END OF OCTOBER 9TH TO 13TH 2019**

In conjunction with the Sound of Charlie Chaplin exhibition at the Museum, this weekend explores the musical world of the iconic Tramp in the bowler hat.



CHARLIE CHAPLIN WITH A SMILE
PARIS ORCHESTRA - FRANK STROBEL

Wednesday October 9th - 8.30 PM

Thursday October 10th - 8.30 PM

Grande salle Pierre Boulez -
Philharmonie



BENEDICT MASON / CHAPLIN
OPERAS

ENSEMBLE MODERN - JOHANNES
KALITZKE

Friday October 11th – 8.30 PM

Concert Hall - Cité de la Musique



A WOMAN OF PARIS (Concert film)

TIMOTHY BROCK – PARIS CHAMBER
ORCHESTRA

Saturday October 12th – 8.30 PM

Grande salle Pierre Boulez -
Philharmonie



THE TRAMP, OCTAVE AND COIL

THE ANIMATED VOICES

Concert film in Family - from 6 y/o

Saturday October 12th – 11 AM
and 3 PM

Sunday October 13th – 3 PM

Amphitheatre – Cité de la Musique



THE TRAMP, SOUND TECHNICIAN

MANIFESTO ORCHESTRA- MÉLANIE
LEVY-THIÉBAUT

Sunday October 13th – 11 AM

Concert Hall – Cité de la Musique



THE CUBIST TRAMP

PARIS CONSERVATOIRE ORCHESTRA

Patrick DAVIN - Direction

Saturday October 12th – 5 PM

Concert Hall – Cité de la Musique



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