

*****PRESENTING CHARLIE CHAPLIN*****

[[PLAY RESTORING THE GOLD RUSH 2:50]]

Our main mission at Criterion is to present films in beautiful restorations of the sound and picture. It is the most important aspect of our work here, and sometimes, as you just saw, even the restoration work becomes the source of a supplement to the film. That piece was posted on our website in June of 2012 and has accrued over 17,000 unique views. It is just one example of another goal of ours, to cultivate a new audience for Charlie Chaplin, while still engaging his longtime fans.

It is rare that people express to us their interest in how we create the supplemental material for our home video releases. Many ask about the films front and center, and how we decide which titles to include in our collection. The supplements play a supporting role, as well they should. If the film itself is the soul of the edition, the supplements both print and audio-visual are its life-blood, for they deliver the story about the film at hand.

Back in the mid-1980s, the Criterion Collection, then part of the Voyager Company, embraced the revolutionary laserdisc format as an opportunity to provide the viewer with supplemental material. In 1987, we produced the first audio commentary track for KING KONG. Sometimes, we used the extra laserdisc space to present production documents and stills galleries, as we did for LES ENFANT DU PARADIS, or archival programs to complement the film, such as a collection of speeches by President Nixon for Robert Altman's SECRET HONOR. This material became a key component to Criterion's editions and helped to ensure the longevity of the company's catalogue and fan base.

Fast-forward several years to the next best home video offering – the DVD. With the DVD format came more room to stretch out and present the various new and archival materials. With the DVD also came the widely popular collector's edition box sets, with multiple feature films enclosed. For example, in 2003, France's MK2 produced a groundbreaking 2-volume box set of all but one of Charlie Chaplin's feature films plus the 7 short films he made for First National – an edition that was hugely comprehensive in its offering of archival materials. It also included new half-hour documentaries on most of the features by a range of well-known documentarians, and new video introductions by Chaplin biographer David Robinson. The MK2 box set was repackaged for North America and released by Warner Brothers.

When Warner Brothers' rights to these Chaplin titles expired, Criterion jumped at the chance to revisit the films. From the start, we knew we wanted to give each title its due, one enduring masterpiece at a time.

I began working at Criterion in 2002. The Blu-ray did not yet exist and the DVD was still a hotly desired commodity. Internally at Criterion, we were producing more and more content for each title, raising the bar on ourselves with every new edition. Needless to say, our customers' expectations were high. When Chaplin's feature films came up for discussion at Criterion, I threw my name into the hat to produce the first one, no matter what title it might be. To be honest, up until that time, I'd never seen a complete Charlie Chaplin film. True

story. And I had not laid eyes on the MK2/Warner Brothers edition. But I knew enough about Chaplin's importance in cinema history, that my instinct told me this could be a very rich history to explore. As luck would have it, my name was pulled from the hat. I would produce our first edition, MODERN TIMES, and have handled each subsequent release, which so far includes THE GREAT DICTATOR, THE GOLD RUSH, MONSIEUR VERDOUX, and CITY LIGHTS.

Well – I'm getting ahead of myself.

Back in 2010, when I first sat down with the MK2 box set, I thought, "Oh no... What have I gotten myself into..." Aside from tracking all the technical information about silent-filmmaking, learning of Chaplin's tumultuous personal life in the public's eye, and his re-editing of his films and composing new scores later in life, I had an even bigger fish to fry. It was up to me to find a way to contribute something new to the dialogue that would be of interest to his longtime fans and dedicated historians – *and* lure in a younger cinephile audience. Everyone at this conference has spent more dedicated time than I or anyone else at Criterion thinking about Charlie Chaplin. And likely, back in 2003 or since, you viewed the MK2 box sets' contents and learned from its offerings. So, where to jump in? Due to the fact that I myself was a newcomer to Chaplin, my curiosity was considerably piqued, and I was able to pose several questions that I wanted to have answered. Of course, as the producer assigned to Criterion's editions, it was up to me to answer them!

Before production began on our first Chaplin title, Kate Guyonvarch had already taken the time to compile a long list of ideas and topics for us to consider for each film. As it turns out, this pending challenge of how to present new information had been on her mind as well! It was Kate's infectious enthusiasm that both inspired me and grounded me. It is her list that I return to again and again, finding new connections to be made. And, as with all of the titles that move through Criterion, one of our main objectives is to recognize what story to tell about the film. Engaging in lengthy conversations with my Criterion colleagues, with Chaplin historians, with Kate and with Cecilia Cenciarelli here at the Cineteca di Bologna, I aimed to develop, through new and archival supplemental material plus narrative-based DVD and Bluray menus, a more structured and streamlined approach to appreciating Chaplin's genius, one film at a time. Today, I'll be playing for you video clips from a few of our new programs, as I discuss each edition.

[[SWITCH TO DVD COVER OF **MODERN TIMES**]]

Our first stop was MODERN TIMES, and for this maiden voyage, it seemed appropriate to start off with a quintessential Criterion audio commentary track that would deliver a mix of all the introductory goods about Chaplin for the new viewer as well as more rare quotations and facts for the returning fan. For this, I wanted to honor David Robinson, author of the first truly comprehensive biography of Chaplin's life and work. Given the plethora of on-set photography for this film, I asked Jeffrey Vance to curate and write the script for a video essay that would incorporate these photographs and select ephemera, a photographic production history of the film.

I also called upon John Bengtson, author of *Silent Traces*, to create a video essay on the locations where Chaplin filmed and what has become of them. It was John who encouraged me to tap the knowledge of two other dedicated hobbyists, visual effects expert Craig Barron and sound designer Ben Burtt, about the special effects in sound and image in Chaplin's films. As some of you may know, John participates in a special event with Craig and Ben at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Los Angeles, presenting three unique angles on Chaplin's artistry and direction. As luck would have it, MODERN TIMES happened to be one of Craig and Ben's favored films. And so it was for this release that I made our first documentary short, titled A BUCKET OF WATER AND A GLASS MATTE.

Here's a clip in which Ben Burtt praises Chaplin for his selective use of sound effects, as well as a bit of detective work with Craig, involving the roller skating sequence. I should offer a spoiler alert for anyone has yet to see this movie.

[[PLAY CLIP FROM A BUCKET OF WATER AND A GLASS MATTE 4:59]]

MODERN TIMES was essentially my training ground for determining how to best incorporate the wealth of resources available – and it was my introduction to so many of you scholars and historians who are here today. With the production of this DVD and Bluray, I imagined each of Chaplin's films as being representative of his unique reaction to his time and place. His movies were made either during a turbulent era in world politics, or during the shift from silent cinema to sound, or during a particular turmoil in his personal life – and sometimes all three! So to follow suit from MODERN TIMES, I made a conscious decision to distribute across the editions a more detailed presentation of Chaplin's journey as director, composer, writer, performer, and comedian of the world.

[[SWITCH TO DVD COVER OF **THE GREAT DICTATOR**]]

THE GREAT DICTATOR, our second Chaplin release, is a good example of a title where many people had completed the legwork before me, and the challenge was to understand the full arc of this film's story – The Tramp boldly takes on the Dictator, in Chaplin's first full-dialogue film – and how best to present the plot points.

Timing was everything. A few years earlier at the Cinema Ritrovato, Cecilia Cenciarelli, in collaboration with David Robinson, presented on Chaplin's never-realized Napoleon project which he essentially morphed into the more urgent THE GREAT DICTATOR. Meanwhile, I learned from Frank Scheide [SHYDE] at the Chaplin conference in Zanesville in 2010, that he'd spent a great deal of time on the subject of Charlie's brother Sydney Chaplin and his 1921 feature-filmmaking attempt KING, QUEEN, JOKER, a film in which Sydney plays both the humorous barber and the barbarous King.

After discussing both of these angles with Frank and Cecilia, I felt it was essential to foreground these lesser-known influences on Chaplin's vision, for Hitler appropriating the Tramp's moustache wasn't the only catalyst for Adenoid Hynkel and the Jewish barber. There was much more going on here for Chaplin. Sydney's film and the Napoleon project taken

together inspired the idea of a lived duality, a perfect, comedic construct by which Chaplin could address the brewing evil of Adolph Hitler. With additional help from Bryony Dixon at the BFI, I leaned heavily on Frank's detailed notes to compile one complete sequence from KING, QUEEN, JOKER. I also worked closely with Cecilia to come up with a way to present David's and her research.

Here is a clip from the video essay CHAPLIN'S NAPOLEON, in which we learn of the filmmaker's sincere and increasing interest in the French Emperor, as well as in world politics.

[[PLAY CLIP FROM CHAPLIN'S NAPOLEON 3:43]]

In addition to these supplements, we were able to include Kevin Brownlow and David Gill's excellent documentary THE TRAMP AND THE DICTATOR. All the pieces were there, ready to be shaped into the story of this film. Along with a new commentary by Chaplin historians Dan Kamin and Hooman Mehran and a visual essay by Jeffrey Vance on the "clown as prophet," this edition would be one-stop shopping for all audiences, both new and dedicated. [2:02]

In addition, THE GREAT DICTATOR was the first Chaplin title for which we produced one of our web-based promotional pieces, a series we call THREE REASONS – a 1-minute 30-second crystallization of the best of the film, targeted at a new audience.

[[PLAY THREE REASONS: THE GREAT DICTATOR 1:31]]

One of the questions we're asked most frequently at Criterion is "Why did you release that movie?" So we worked with a branding company to give THREE REASONS a Criterion-look and feel, and at this point, we've created around 100 of them. Many theaters around the country use them in place of trailers when they're promoting our new releases.

It was May of 2012 when we posted that piece, and it turned out to be a big hit – with nearly 8,500 views so far. Little by little, we've been able to find new ways to draw the attention of a younger audience, inspiring in them a sincere curiosity that can be tracked by the sometimes thousands of likes and hundreds of comments that follow each post.

Another example is this photo of a young Charlie Chaplin paired with a quote by Stanley Kubrick, which we posted in April of this year.

[[SWITCH TO CHAPLIN PIC W/ KUBRICK QUOTE]]

So far, it has received over 250,000 unique views on facebook. These kinds of one-off bursts of the iconic Charlie Chaplin have become extremely beneficial in the expansion of the Criterion community, as well as spawning news fans of the universally beloved Tramp character.

[[SWITCH TO DVD COVER OF THE GOLD RUSH]]

In 2012, we turned our viewfinder to THE GOLD RUSH, and it was quite literally an embarrassment of riches. Ways to explore Chaplin's multi-faceted vision were numerous.

THE GOLD RUSH would be the earliest of the Chaplin titles we'd release so far – therefore, it was important to properly take the viewer back in time. Before Chaplin took on the revolutionary topic of man vs machine and before he fired a direct hit at Adolph Hitler, he found solid ground with THE GOLD RUSH. Chaplin forever put great demands on himself as an artist, as a comedian, and as a director, and his 1925 rags to riches tale exemplifies this. Full of now iconic set pieces, THE GOLD RUSH would force him to visualize the sets, locations, and effects as he never had before and would prove to the world that he was capable of filmmaking on an epic scale.

And yet, the original 1925 silent film was not what Chaplin considered to be the final version. For our audience, it was essential to address this first. We needed to explore the history of the film itself, both for our viewers and for posterity's sake. What enabled us to achieve this successfully was the Chaplin family's generous decision to allow us to include the 1925 silent GOLD RUSH, presented as a supplement to the Chaplin-approved 1942 sound version. To help tell this story, I turned to the indefatigable Kevin Brownlow and Jeffrey Vance, both of them charismatic and insightful storytellers who brought this history to life in our short documentary PRESENTING THE GOLD RUSH.

This next clip offers some of that history and the start of the David Gill/Kevin Brownlow restoration.

[[PLAY CLIP FROM PRESENTING THE GOLD RUSH 4:23]]

For the 1942 reissue of the film, Chaplin composed a score for full orchestra. Hold on a minute. Charlie Chaplin (aka the Tramp) was also a composer? When I mentioned the topic to colleagues and friends, they had no idea that Chaplin composed his own music! I too was equally fascinated, and I wanted to learn about the various phases in Chaplin's musicianship and about the people who worked closely with him arranging the music and orchestration. Conductor and composer Timothy Brock would be our guide, and here in Bologna I recorded an extensive interview with Tim. Here are a few clips from that program.

[[PLAY CLIP FROM MUSIC BY CHARLES CHAPLIN 4:20]]

This was also the first time I was able to tap the rare audio interview with Rollie Totheroh, recorded in 1964 and well preserved by Rollie's grandson David Totheroh. When he and I first corresponded, I was already working again with Craig Barron on the innovative time in silent film production and visual effects that THE GOLD RUSH represents. While in Bologna with Tim Brock, I spent time with the Cineteca's digital Chaplin holdings and discovered set photography that I hadn't seen before. These images were taken during Chaplin's initial attempt to film the snowstorm scene, where the cabin would spin around and ultimately land on the precipice of a cliff. Rollie Totheroh recalls in his interview that, originally, they attempted to *drag* the cabin with a team of horses in real snow. This failed attempt became one more reason why it made sense to move the rest of production back to the Chaplin Studios in Hollywood. ... When I made the connection between that story and

these photographs, I was beside myself with excitement. Bringing these archival photographs to life is the kind of detective work that makes these supplements worth every second of effort.

Here's that clip from A TIME OF INNOVATION.

[[PLAY CLIP FROM A TIME OF INNOVATION 3:18]]

As I read the various Chaplin biographies, one fact of his life that resonated for me was that Chaplin moved his family to Switzerland. Again, most of my friends and colleagues had no idea of the details behind this sudden departure from the US, nor did they know that Chaplin had become persona non grata, hounded by the House Un-American Activities Commission for being a Communist or Communist sympathizer.

[[SWITCH TO DVD COVER OF MONSIEUR VERDOUX]]

Enter MONSIEUR VERDOUX, our fourth Chaplin film and, from my perspective, the right place to discuss at length Chaplin's reputation in the public's eye. How could someone of such a meteoric rise to fame and monumental international acclaim, fall to such an extreme low? The powers that would fuel this fall were the American press – who bolstered his popularity, tracking his every move from the time he first stepped out as the Tramp – and an increasingly paranoid US government.

I learned from Kate Guyonvarch that it was Charlie's brother Sydney Chaplin who had the incredible foresight to encourage Charlie to retain the numerous pressbooks created by the Chaplin Studios' secretaries. As many of you know, the original documents from the studios and personal archive are housed at the municipal archives in Montreux, Switzerland, managed by Evelyne Lüthi-Graf. Due to this extensive and well-preserved collection, I could imagine a program covering Charlie Chaplin and his tumultuous relationship with the American press. With a little bit of encouragement, I convinced Kate to participate. From the start of our work with Roy Export, Kate was always keen on sharing with me any applicable photos she took of pages from the Chaplin Studios' pressbooks. From her enthusiasm, I understood that there was a great story here to be told. And to help round out the broader spectrum of this roller coaster relationship, and in terrific detail, I also interviewed Charles Maland, author of Chaplin and American Culture: the Evolution of a Star Image.

[[PLAY CLIP FROM CHAPLIN AND THE AMERICAN PRESS 4:41]]

From 1947, we step back in time to 1931...

[[SWITCH TO DVD COVER OF CITY LIGHTS]]

...and to the film so many feel is Chaplin's crowning achievement in silent film, CITY LIGHTS. The main question I had to ask myself was, what have we not covered about this man and how to avoid being redundant? One angle we had yet to address fully was his artistic independence.

Throughout his career, Chaplin made very bold moves, using the moving picture as his platform to address, sometimes subtly and other times sharply, the concerns of the everyman in the face of the looming economic and political machines. This conviction seemed to start with CITY LIGHTS and his outright refusal to embrace the talking picture, when every other film studio had fallen in line with this new technology. Within the first five minutes of CITY LIGHTS, Chaplin makes his position very clear, as Chaplin biographer Jeffrey Vance describes in this clip from his audio commentary track for the film.

[[PLAY CLIP FROM THE COMMENTARY 4:23]]

Along with a new program titled CHAPLIN STUDIOS: CREATIVE FREEDOM BY DESIGN plus a new narration track Hooman Mehran recorded for the rare on-set footage shot by Ralph Barton, new fans of CITY LIGHTS can learn about and observe Chaplin's determination to get what he wanted for this film and the atmosphere in which it happened.

Of course, what I haven't yet mentioned is that each edition is also a thing of art in itself – from the liner notes, which so far include contributions from writers Saul Austerlitz, Michael Wood, Luc Sante, Ignatiy Vishnevetsky, and Gary Giddins, and reprints of Charlie's own essays, to the inspired packaging and menu designs.

[[SHOW FIVE PHOTOS OF NEXT FILMS]]

With THE KID, LIMELIGHT, A WOMAN OF PARIS, THE CIRCUS, and A KING IN NEW YORK, plus THE CHAPLIN REVUE still to come, we look forward to working with others in the Chaplin community, as we move on to the next title, and the next, and the next. I'm confident each will hold its own. As you all know, that's the wondrous thing about Charlie Chaplin. His life was that rich, his artistry was that complex, and his comic genius was that inexhaustible. Just as this conference proves, there are endless ways to consider the story of Charlie Chaplin. It's been happening ever since he stepped out as the Tramp 100 years ago. And so too, we will continue to gather the necessary research at Criterion, and perhaps make a few discoveries along the way, to help extend, promote, and preserve Chaplin's cinematic story.