



# Charlie Chaplin and His Times

*Kenneth S. Lynn*

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## **Charlie Chaplin and His Times** Kenneth S. Lynn

One of America's most distinguished biographers, Lynn goes far beyond a mere recounting of the well-known events in Chaplin's career. By setting his life, his art, and his controversial politics in the context of his times, Lynn gives the book extra richness and dimension. In penetrating and exquisite detail, Lynn also traces the deep psychological connections between the man and the artist and brings his own keen critical intelligence and historical awareness to the meanings of Chaplin's films. And he has at last succeeded in separating the facts of his life from Chaplin's own artful fictions. Combining the strengths of a seasoned literary biographer and social historian, Lynn debunks the Chaplin myths passed on by unquestioning film critics, biographers, adulatory documentary filmmakers - and by Chaplin himself. He returns to the original sources to trace the origins of Chaplin's comic routines, and relates the story lines of his films to events in his childhood as well as his adult preoccupations. Lynn documents Chaplin's meteoric rise as a film actor, his failed early marriages and love affairs with glamorous stars, his communist sympathies, the infamous Joan Barry case, his voluntary exile in Switzerland with his young wife, Oona O'Neill Chaplin, and his triumphant return to America in 1972. And through it all is the gleaming thread of Chaplin's films. By delving deeply into the unique combination of slapstick and sentiment, wit and whimsy that characterize Chaplin's art, Lynn deftly captures both the magnetism of the man and the magic he created in his films.

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