

### Introduction

**Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin** was an English comic actor, filmmaker, and composer, who became significantly popular during the era of silent film, an era of cinema that persisted from the mid 1890's until the 1920's, where movies have no sound, synchronized audio recording, nor audible dialogs. It was the era where films were watched while accompanied by a pianist. In this era, Charlie Chaplin became most popular for his character, The Tramp. Charlie Chaplin's career spanned more than 75 years, since his childhood in the Victorian era until a year before his death in 1977.

### Early Life

Charles Spencer Chaplin was born on April 16, 1889 in [London, England, United Kingdom](#). Chaplin had a rough childhood; his mother, [Hannah Hill Chaplin](#), a talented singer, actress, and piano player, spent most of her life in and out of mental hospitals. His father, [Charles Spencer Chaplin Sr.](#) was a fairly successful singer until he began drinking. After his parents separated, Charlie and his half-brother, Sidney, spent most of their childhood in orphanages, where they often went hungry and were beaten if they misbehaved. He first started acting at age five. He acted in a music hall in [1894](#), standing in for his mother.

When Charlie was a child, he was kept in bed for many weeks from a bad illness. At night, his mother would

## Charlie Chaplin Facts

sit at the window and act out what was going on outside. His first important work came when he joined The Eight Lancashire Lads. In 1900, his brother Sydney helped him get the role of a comic cat in the pantomime *Cinderella*. In 1903 he was in a play called "Jim: A Romance of Cockayne". Chaplin was in Casey's 'Court Circus' variety show. The next year, he became a clown in Fred Karno's 'Fun Factory' comedy company. It was while working for the Karno Company in 1913 that he was signed to appear in comedy movies with Mack Sennett's Keystone films. It was here that Chaplin developed his "Little Tramp" character with which he achieved global fame and success.

## Awards

Chaplin won two special **Oscars**. Chaplin had first been chosen for both "Best Actor" and "Best Comedy Directing". But then, instead, he was given a special award "for versatility and genius in acting, writing, directing and producing". Chaplin's second special award came 44 years later, in 1972. When getting this award, Chaplin had the longest standing ovation (people standing up and clapping) in Academy Award history. In 1976 he was given the **BAFTA Academy Fellowship Award**, a lifetime achievement award. Chaplin became the first actor to have appeared on the cover of **Time** magazine in 1925.

Chaplin once entered in a Charlie Chaplin look-a-like contest. Chaplin lost the contest.