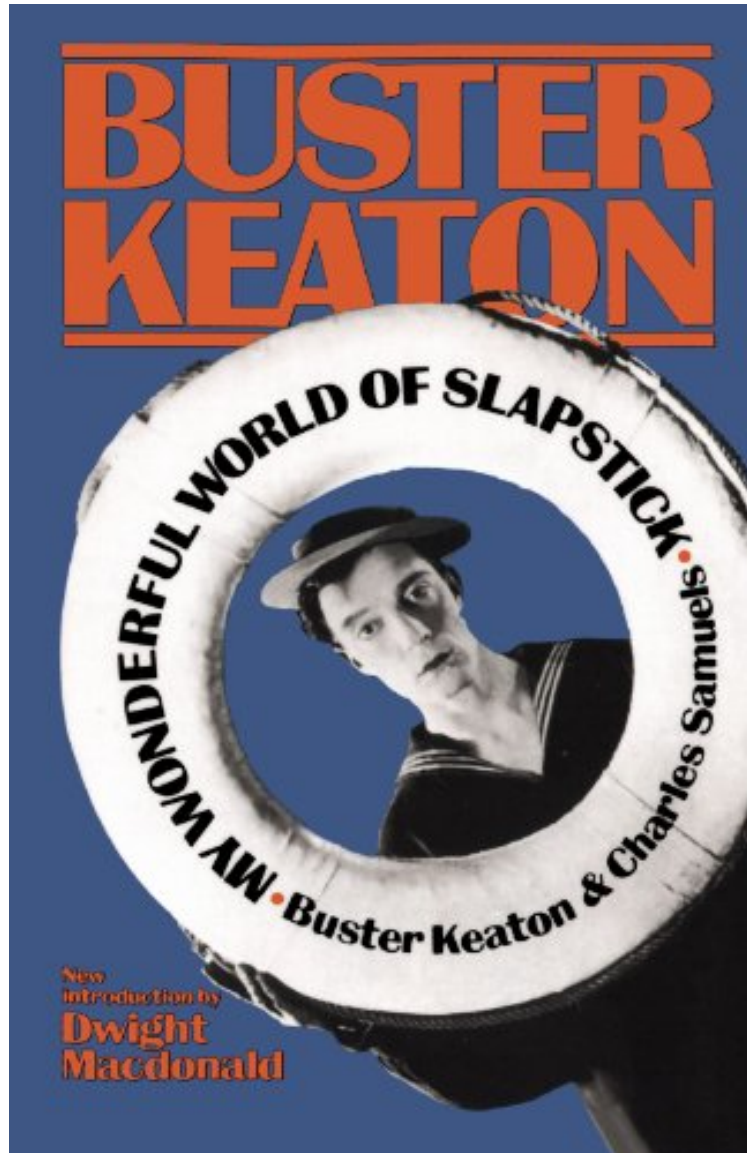


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Buster Keaton, Charles Samuels

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Buster Keaton, Charles Samuels : My Wonderful World Of Slapstick (A Da Capo paperback) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised My Wonderful World Of Slapstick (A Da Capo paperback):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. One of a Kind By Thomas Stamper If you are interested in Buster Keaton and his films this book is a must. The guy is just a good soul. His tales of working on vaudeville with his parents through his film career to his resurgence during the 1950s are funny, interesting, and heartfelt. Other authors and documentaries have argued that Buster was treated poorly or taken advantage of, but he speaks of everyone well. His first wife, Natalie Talmadge, by all accounts was a spoiled and vengeful woman that took everything he had including the kids and left him to rot. He doesn't speak ill of her nor even mention her by name. He doesn't blame Joe Schenck for pushing him toward MGM where his film career would crumble within the studio confines. Instead he speaks up for his friends like Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle whose career ended due to a scandal that was manufactured by the press and prosecutors. There is a lot here on the gags especially the early vaudeville days and how child labor laws made it difficult for him to work with his parents. There wasn't really a time when he wasn't working. His ability to take a fall at such an early age prompted Harry Houdini to give him the Buster nickname. Unlike many of these kinds of stories, Buster loves his father and portrays him as a kind of loving patriarch. He doesn't resent working as a kid. He feels privileged for the opportunity. He describes some of the film gags but skips over or lightly discusses so many of his classic films. I'm guessing it's humility. He talks the most about the MGM release, *The Cameraman*, although he cites *The General*, and *The Navigator* as his personal favorites. He tells the scenario for a few MGM films that were never made including a spoof on *Grand Hotel* that would have teamed him with Laurel and Hardy. Keaton has quite an interesting relationship with Charlie Chaplin. Early in the book he explains the fundamental difference between their silent characters. If Chaplin's character wanted something he couldn't buy he would either try to steal it or give it up altogether. Keaton in the same situation would spend the movie trying to figure out how to earn it. That difference says much about the worldviews of each man and their actual lives. The more Chaplin earned the more he was fatalistic about the prospects of mankind. Whereas Keaton always saw life as an opportunity no matter how beaten down he was personally or professionally. Keaton also admits no interest nor understand of politics and is surprised at Chaplin's flirtation with communism as far back as 1920. He also explains that Chaplin's business smarts made him wealthy. Keaton just liked to work. There is a funny section about their three days together working on *Limelight*. Chaplin is surprised at how good Buster looks which Buster ascribes to his many appearances on television. Chaplin hates TV and delivers a diatribe against it and then changes the subject. I would argue that talkies made dramatic pictures much better but have never really improved the kind of comedies made by Chaplin and Keaton. If you have an interest in film and comedy especially you will get a lot out of this reflection by Buster Keaton. You can't go wrong at \$4.99 for the kindle version.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An Honest Look At The Life of One of The Greatest Comedians By John Watson Bruce I was amazed at the honesty and absolute humility He showed as He told His life story. I had read "tempest in a flat hat" and enjoyed it immensely but I wanted to hear what Buster had to say and I was not disappointed. From his start in Vaudeville with his Mom Dad, to his start in films with Fatty Arbuckle, to His own production company Financed by Joe Schenk and then to his signing with MGM which started with his loss of artistic control because the large Studio's ran everything like an assembly in a factory. It was their product and that was that. His divorce from his wife, to his drinking, losing custody of his two boys, to getting fired and rehired as a uncredited gagman. He had some regrets yet he wasn't a bitter man in fact in the 50's with the help of tv he became in demand again. yet in Europe he was still very popular there and so in the twilight of his career he was very popular here also, while Chaplin, Lloyd and other had long since retired. I Highly recommend this book!

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Good read By TD2000A good biography. I don't know how I became interested in Buster Keaton, but he sure is talented comedian, actor, director and stunt man. Buster does a great job recalling his life in vaudeville, the silent movies, talkies and beyond. I enjoyed his insight on his life as an entertainer.

Buster Keaton's autobiography is a view into the quirky mind behind the stoic face of the legendary film comedian.

From the Back Cover Keaton's autobiography, *My Wonderful World of Slapstick*, is our only record of the quirky mind behind the stoic face. Filled with stories about his childhood in vaudeville where, billed as 'The Human Mop,' he was slammed on the floor, hurled into wings, banged on the bass drum-by his father! About the Author Charles Samuels, a New York newspaperman, wrote biographies of Jody Garland, Lizzie Borden, and Evelyn Nesbit. He worked with Buster Keaton on *My Wonderful World of Slapstick* (also available from Da Capo Press). Donald Bogle is the author of *Brown Sugar: Eighty Years of America's Black Female Superstars* (also available from De Capo Press), *Blacks in American Film Television: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, and *Toms, Coon, Mulattoes, Mammies Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films*. He has been called "the dean of black film history."