

King Of Comedy: The Life & Art Of Jerry Lewis

Shawn Levy



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Shawn Levy's fascinating biography - the product of vast research and interviews with contemporaries, admirers, foes, and even, briefly, Lewis himself - traces the story of a man who defines High American Show Biz. At points along the time line of his career, Lewis has been the highest-paid performer in history in film, on television, and (in 1995!) on Broadway. With partner Dean Martin, he was half of the most successful comedy duo of all time. He was the first director who debuted in talkies to direct himself. He was a direct, acknowledged influence on giants from Woody Allen to Lenny Bruce to David Letterman to Jim Carrey. He is a Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor, has raised over \$1 billion in charity, and was once nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize. And, since the 1950s, he has been one of the most recognized faces on earth. For almost that long, though, people have argued over what Jerry Lewis means. Is he a talented comedian or a grotesque mimic? A startlingly original director or a pretender to Chaplin's throne? A multifaceted entertainer or a megalomaniacal egoist? A tireless champion of the disabled or a tireless self-promoter who has confused America's charitable impulses with affection for him as a performer?

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