



The Ninth Annual Kangaroo Valley Buster Keaton Silent Movie Show

starring pianist
Robert Constable
and actor **Earle Cross**

**7.30pm Saturday October 1 2011, Kangaroo Valley Hall
presented by The Kangaroo Valley-Remexio Partnership**

This is the ninth time that **Robert Constable** has come here - initially from Newcastle, these days from Auckland - to help us raise money for our projects in East Timor. While we're starting to run out of **Buster Keaton's** funniest films, we're certainly not of enthusiasm for the silent movie medium. Tonight: Keaton's brilliantly original **Sherlock Jr.** followed after intermission by a new cut-down audio-visual presentation - script by **Peter Wesley-Smith** - of the 1919 Australian film **The Sentimental Bloke**. This features live performances by veteran actor **Earle Cross** as well as by Kangaroo Valley's own **Patsy Radic** and other members of the local vocal group **The Thirsty Night Singers**.



Robert Constable is a well-known Australian pianist, composer and improviser. He has a particular fascination with improvising accompaniments for silent films (at least three of his great-aunts and -uncles used to play professionally for the "silents" in the period following World War 1) and has been presenting some of the classics in this genre for many years. His work with silent films transcends mere background music, combining his various pianistic, composing and improvising abilities to create an instant soundscape for the images on the screen. With this approach he enters into a genuine artistic partnership with the film. He has a particular affinity with Buster Keaton and over the last ten years has interpreted most of the Keaton classics. Having retired as Professor and Dean of Music at the University of Newcastle, Robert is now Head of the School of Music, University of Auckland, New Zealand.

Earle Cross is an actor originally from Brisbane, where he began his long career on radio and stage. He came to Sydney in 1957, the start of TV, to appear for five years on the ABC Children's Session (the Argonauts) on radio and television. He played in two revues at the then-famous Phillip Street Theatre and appeared in several plays at the Independent and Palace Theatres. In 1964 he sailed for England, where he worked for fifteen years, appearing in the West End and touring in regional theatres. Since his return to his homeland he has played leading parts in "The Diary of Anne Frank", "Whose life is it anyway", "Pygmalion", "Absurd Person Singular", "Away", and many others. Having made many appearances on ABC radio and television, he has now retired to a magic acre near Berry where he paints, writes, gardens and dusts the furniture.

After the destruction and killing which swept East Timor in September 1999, a small group of KV residents felt a need to do something. A partnership was discussed with an East Timorese village and KVRP - the **Kangaroo Valley-Remexio Partnership** - was formed. Now, several years on, we have a mix of vital local and district people working with many East Timorese in Australia and East Timor.

Donations (tax-deductible) are always welcome! If you would like to assist, please contact **Paul Turnock** on 02 4465 1357 (email: turnockp@westnet.com.au). 100% of donations go to East Timor as we self-fund our own administration and activities.



from **Buster Keaton's Sherlock Jr.: The Inception of Inception** by **Chris Baker**, November 29, 2010 [www.wired.com/magazine/2010/11/pl_prototype_sherlockjr/]:

A movie that marshals eye-popping special effects, precision editing, sophisticated action choreography, and diabolically elaborate sets to explore the nexus between dreams and reality. Sounds familiar, right? Well, it's not *Inception* - it's the 1924 silent comedy **Sherlock Jr.**, directed by **Buster Keaton**.

On the surface, **Sherlock Jr.** is a typical Walter Mitty tale: A hapless movie projectionist, framed by a romantic rival for a theft he didn't commit, fantasizes about becoming a detective and clearing his name. The film is filled with Keaton's signature acrobatic stunts and delightful visual wit, but things really get interesting when the projectionist falls asleep while screening a drawing-room mystery. Dreaming that the movie characters are his sweetheart and the rival, his dream-self rises, walks up the aisle, and climbs into the screen to confront them. (To achieve this effect, Keaton built a carefully lit set within a set.)

The dream reality tries to expel the interloper: first, his nemesis tosses him back into the audience. (As he lands, we see the snoozing projectionist twitch.) When he clammers back into the screen, the film medium itself appears to shake him loose by abruptly cutting scenes out from under him: the drawing room becomes the front stairs, shutting him out of the house. As he descends, the steps become a garden bench, causing him to take a nosedive. Dusting himself off and sitting down, he lands on his keister in a busy street. And so on - diving off a wave-battered rock, he lands in a snowbank. By precisely matching posture and camera angle from scene to scene, Keaton made it look like reality was shifting around him.

Half a century before Christopher Nolan was born, and long before CGI, Keaton created a vivid world with its own laws and internally consistent logic. Call it the inception of **Inception** - it probably left just as many folks scratching their heads on the way out.

from **Treasures from the National Library** [www.nla.gov.au/collect/treasures/jun_treasure.html]:



About 250 silent feature films were made in Australia between 1906 and 1930. One of the fewer than 50 that have survived in whole or in part is **The Sentimental Bloke** (1919). Described by the Oxford Companion to Australian Film as a 'national treasure', it was directed and produced by **Raymond Longford**, filmed by **Arthur Higgins**, and starred **Arthur Tauchert** as the Bloke and **Lottie Lyell** as Doreen. Based on **C.J. Dennis's** long verse narrative **The Songs of a Sentimental Bloke**, the story tells how the Bloke's wayward life of drinkin', stoushin' and gamblin' in the urban slums is redeemed by the love of a good woman - his 'ideel tart' Doreen - and a new life forged with married bliss in the countryside.

The film was originally shown to rapturous audiences in Australia in 1919 and later in England and Scotland and the United States of America. 'It is so full of beauty, pathos, humour and humanity, and is so free from false sentiment and any kind of affectation, that it is absorbing from start to finish,' reported the Glasgow Citizen.

Although C.J. Dennis's poem was originally set in Melbourne, the film was shot largely in Woolloomooloo and other inner city suburbs of Sydney. It cost 2000 pounds to produce and was first screened in Melbourne Town Hall on 4 October 1919, then in Sydney on 18 October that year. Those attending screenings of the film in Adelaide were able to enjoy the original score composed, compiled and played by **Tom King**. One of the songs to accompany the film was **The Curse of an Aching Heart**, the score of which was found by Lottie Lyell in a second-hand shop, and which was sung by Doreen in the film to win back the heart of her bloke. [In this evening's version, the song will be sung by **Patsy Radic** accompanied by other members of **The Thirsty Night Singers (Nell Britton, Janette Carter, Nadia Intihar, Peter Stanton and Martin Wesley-Smith)**]

Script and video editing for this new version by **Peter Wesley-Smith**.

Many thanks to many people, including **John George**, the **Kangaroo Valley General Store & Newsagency**, **Derek Lucas**, **Peter Morgan**, **Oscar Scherl**, **Peter Stanton**, **Rosemary Stanton**, **Martin Wesley-Smith**, **Peter Wesley-Smith**, **The Thirsties**, and to those who contributed to tonight's supper. Keaton-Constable graphic by **Sue Prescott**. Poster design by **Diana Jaffray**.