

The Tenth Annual Kangaroo Valley Buster Keaton Silent Movie Show

The Tenth AKVBKSMS, held on Saturday September 29, was a magnificent finale to ten years of audio-visual hilarity.

As Orson Wells said in his filmed introduction, Keaton's classic train movie **The General** is one of the greatest movies of all time. Robert Constable's piano-playing was, yet again, the perfect foil to Keaton's visual invention.

Peter Wesley-Smith's new version of **The Man from Kangaroo** improved the 1920 original by cutting it down in length and incorporating verses (read by actor Earle Cross) and song (sung by Patsy Radic). It provided a nice bookend to the very first show, when the audience was enthralled by local actors emulating the man from Kangaroo's death-defying leap from Hampden Bridge. That was in **Dirty Dan**, the first of several local movies included in the series.

A local culture-vulture wrote after the show:

"Overall I feel the tenth AKVBKSMS was the best all round entertainment yet over the ten years. The idea of including song, using Patsy's lovely voice, Earle Cross's very professional rendition of Peter's poem and Peter's clever editing of the film, worked very well with **The Man from Kangaroo**, and Robert more than rose to the occasion on keyboard. I think his composition and performance surpassed any of his before: the tarantella style accompaniment in the chase scene was just one example of how he was able to lift an often viewed (hackneyed) movie to an entirely new and revitalised level ... Robert clearly put much thought into this performance and this showed even more in **The General** with his beguiling melodies and change of pace. It was a truly wonderful night. Thanks to all involved and especially Robert who has been the backbone of this increasingly popular event. Four of our friends drove about two hours to come on the basis of Robert's reputation ... they loved it."

Excerpts from other emails received included the following:

"Patsy was a great addition with a lovely song ... don't think I've ever heard a song about birds spooning! Pure genius. Thank you Rosemary (Stanton) for organizing supper and making the delicious mulled wine. Thanks everyone involved in organizing a fun night. Well done from us."

"The silent movie evening was once again a fabulous treat! The movies very amusing and interesting, Patsy's song delightful, the poetry narration great and the piano accompaniment awesome."

"Saturday night was terrific!! Robert did a great job - and it was good to see a bit of the film without the music - made one realise what a contribution that was!!"

"Thanks for another great night- we brought along two guests, both

first timers to this unique event and they thoroughly enjoyed it ... We would both like to thank Robert and congratulate him on another beautiful performance. He absolutely brings the characters and narrative alive with his thoughtful, thrilling and enchanting ensemble. Hope he will consider another trip to the valley next year! Also like to thank Peter and Patsy and Earle for their amazing contribution. Peter's wit and humour greatly enhanced the movie and Earle's honey-like voice and Patsy's dulcet tones just made the whole thing a real treat."

Organised by the Kangaroo Valley-Remexio Partnership, over the years the event has raised over \$20,000 for projects in Timor-Leste. At the moment there are no plans for an eleventh AKVBKSMS, but, well, you never know ...



Kids excitedly waiting for the show to begin. Actor Earle Cross is in the background.

Martin Wesley-Smith, 24.10.12