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Convict 13, Keaton, Buster, 1920  
The electric house, Keaton, Buster, 1922  
One week, Keaton, Buster, 1920  
Day dreams, Keaton, Buster, 1922  
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Buster Keaton rides again, Spotton, John, 1965  
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Neighbors, Keaton, Buster, 1920  
The love nest, Keaton, Buster, 1923  
The scarecrow, Keaton, Buster, 1920  
The railrodder, Potterton, Gerald, 1965

# **Buster Keaton Forever**

## **Keaton Centennial: 1895-1995**

A series of 42 short and feature films at Pacific Film Archive  
2621 Durant Avenue (one-half block west of College Avenue)  
Berkeley, California (510) 642-1412

### **Screening schedule:**

Saturday July 1 -- *Jon Mirsalis on Piano*

7:30 pm: The Navigator with short films: **Convict 13, The Playhouse, Cops.**

Sunday July 2 -- *Bruce Loeb on Piano*

5:30 pm: The Three Ages with Keaton/Arbuckle shorts: **The Bell Boy, Back Stage, The Cook , and The Butcher Boy**

Saturday July 8 -- *Jon Mirsalis on Piano*

7:30 pm: The General with Sherlock Jr. and short: **Hard Luck**

Sunday July 9 -- *Bruce Loeb on Piano*

5:30 pm: The Saphead with Keaton/Arbuckle shorts: **Coney Island, The Garage, Goodnight Nurse, and The Hayseed**

Saturday July 15 -- *Bruce Loeb on Piano*

7:30 pm: The Cameraman

8:50 pm: **Spite Marriage**

Sunday July 16 -- *Jon Mirsalis on Piano*

5:30 pm: Seven Chances with short films: **One Week, The High Sign, The Electric House**

Sunday July 23 -- *Jon Mirsalis on Piano*

5:30 pm: Steamboat Bill, Jr. with short films: **The Boat, Daydreams, My Wife's Relations**

Sunday July 30 -- *Bruce Loeb on Piano*

5:30 pm: **Battling Butler**

7:00 pm: **The Railrodder and Buster Keaton Rides Again**

Sunday August 13 -- *Jon Mirsalis on Piano*

5:30 pm: Our Hospitality with short films: **Neighbors, The Haunted House, The Frozen North**

Sunday August 20 -- *Bruce Loeb on Piano*

5:30 pm: Go West with short films: **The Paleface, The Blacksmith, The Balloonatic**

Sunday August 27 -- *Bruce Loeb on Piano*

5:30 pm: College with short films: **The Scarecrow, The Goat, The Love Nest**

**This series is presented in cooperation with The Castro Theatre, San Francisco, where Keaton films will be screened July 7 through 19.**

# Buster Keaton Forever

## Keaton Centennial: 1895-1995

### Screenings at Pacific Film Archive

July 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 16, 23, 30; August 13, 20, 27

“Those who care for Keaton cannot care mildly.”—James Agee

There are many ways and many reasons to care for Keaton—first, foremost, and forever, those sublime Buster Bits (as William Nestruck calls them), the ingenious gags and stunts that keep us laughing through our awe. Absurdity reigns in Keaton’s two-reelers, which, apart from being marvelously entertaining in themselves, were fertile experimental ground for gags, stunts, and techniques that show up in pristine form in the features that Keaton variously directed and produced. In all, he is the actor as *auteur*.

Keaton at one hundred does not age because there is nothing “old fashioned” about him. We look to the silents nostalgically, but Buster catches us at that game with tonic satires of historical periods and his own. Love may prevail in the end, but sentiment is long since ground underfoot in gag after gag. There is no innocence in the past. But there is lyricism: Nature in Keaton is ubiquitous, poetic, and pragmatic, a rough real world and a comic foil created from boulders, trees, bridges—and, as in Renoir, water, water everywhere.

As a commentator on the human condition, drawn to the dreamlike in the all-too-real, Keaton is timeless as well. From Wall Street to the college campus, his character is the perennial outsider who tries to enter the world of white male privilege on its terms, and winds up slipping through the cracks (and thereby the door) on his own. Kafka should have been so clever.

This series is presented in cooperation with the Castro Theater, S.F. The films in our series are 35mm prints from the Rohauer Collection, Douris Corporation, except as noted. Thanks to Tim Lanza and Richard Gordon.

## Pacific Film Archive Program Notes:

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### Saturday July 1

Buster Keaton Forever

### **The Navigator** with Short Films 7:30

Jon Mirsalis on Piano

**Convict 13** (1920). Buster, the eponymous inmate, escapes from Death Row only by becoming the executioner. With Keaton, Sybil Seely, Joe Roberts.

**The Playhouse** (1921). In an homage to the vaudeville of Keaton’s youth he plays the audience, the orchestra, and the performers of a small playhouse. “The mixture of memory and magic is potent: *The Playhouse* is the most dreamlike of all Keaton’s films” (David Robinson, *Buster Keaton*). With Keaton, Virginia Fox, Joe Roberts.

**Cops** (1922). Pity the schlemiel who accidentally destroys the annual police parade. “The working-out of this film has the inevitability of tragedy....Buster’s ‘working man, and honest’ is thrust by fate and in perfect, ignorant innocence, into the role of a criminal, forced into opposition with the entire New York police force” (David Robinson). With Keaton, Virginia Fox, Joe Roberts.

• Shorts: Directed, Written by Buster Keaton, Eddie Cline. Photographed by Elgin Lessley. (20 mins each, Silent, B&W, 35mm)



## The Navigator

*Buster Keaton, Donald Crisp (U.S., 1924)*

A young millionaire and the young millionairess he hopes to marry find themselves on an empty ocean liner, adrift in the Atlantic. Two more useless citizens there never were, and now they are faced with the reverse-Robinson Crusoe challenge of setting up housekeeping in the hyper-technical environment of a ship built for thousands—and not a servant in sight. Part of *The Navigator's* enduring greatness lies in the depth and grace of Keaton's very modern vision of a man and a woman, "drifting off to nowhere in the dark," who throw themselves into the world of machines and somehow survive.

• Written by Clyde Bruckman, Jean Havez, Joseph Mitchell. Photographed by Elgin Lessley, Byron Houck. With Keaton, Kathryn McGuire. (63 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm)

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## Sunday July 2

Buster Keaton Forever

### The Three Ages with Keaton/Arbuckle Shorts 5:30

Bruce Loeb on Piano

Fatty Arbuckle Shorts: Keaton gave up a lucrative Broadway contract to join Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle in his studio. From day one, recalled Arbuckle, Keaton "lived in the camera," and in these Arbuckle two-reelers, in which he plays foil to Arbuckle's dexterous fat clown, we can see him learning all he needed to know about physical comedy. In Keaton's first film appearance, in *The Butcher Boy*, "what we see is the perfect vaudevillian at work...his solitary calm already rivets attention" (David Robinson).

**The Bell Boy** (1918, 22 mins), **Back Stage** (1919, 20 mins), **The Cook** (1918, 16 mins), and **The Butcher Boy** (1917, 22 mins).

Directed by Roscoe Arbuckle. Photographed by Elgin Lessley. With Arbuckle, Buster Keaton, Al St. John, Alice Lake. (Total: 80 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm)

## The Three Ages

*Buster Keaton, Eddie Kline (U.S., 1923)*

Keaton's rendition of *Intolerance* follows Buster's trials of manhood from the Stone Age, to the Roman Forum, to the Roaring '20s ("the age of speed, need, and greed")—and back again. Three sets, three stories—three two-reelers, essentially—are ingeniously interwoven into a first feature for Keaton. In each, Buster is pitted against the larger, craftier, more sophisticated Wallace Beery for the love of the beautiful Margaret Leahy. Comic anachronism reigns (as opposed to the poetic period realism of his very next film, *Our Hospitality*). Love will always out, but no matter what the age, or the film, a guy like Buster first has to massage the lion's paws.

• Written by Clyde Bruckman, Jean Havez, Joseph Mitchell. Photographed by Elgin Lessley. With Keaton, Wallace Beery, Margaret Leahy, Joe Roberts. (60 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm)

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## Saturday July 8

Buster Keaton Forever

### The General with Sherlock Jr. and Short 7:30

Jon Mirsalis on Piano

**Hard Luck** (*Buster Keaton, Eddie Cline, 1921*). Keaton's own favorite among the two-reelers. Buster, weary of life, tries and fails at every method to end it all, until the Scotch he takes instead of poison gives him a new outlook. Thus renewed, he takes on the challenges of country-club life with predictable aplomb.

Written by Keaton, Cline. Photographed by Elgin Lessley. With Keaton, Virginia Fox, Joe Roberts. (c. 20 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm)



## Sherlock Jr.

*Buster Keaton (U.S., 1924)*

Andrew Sarris called it Keaton's 8 1/2, and in the end *Sherlock Jr.* will be Keaton's most enduring commentary on the art of cinema, which has the power to make artists of us all. Buster plays a projectionist who dreams his way onto the screen and into a movie in which he resolves the conflicts of his own life. As early as 1925 *Sherlock Jr.* was recognized by René Clair for its Pirandello-like dramatic structure, and it was much admired by the French Surrealists. The film is equally impressive for Keaton's brilliantly modulated acrobatics—offscreen, the hapless hero hoists himself on his own banana peel, but onscreen he can ride on the handlebars of a driverless motorcycle, make a boat out of a car, and perform any number of cinematic miracles without special effects.

• Written by Clyde Bruckman, Joseph Mitchell, Jean Havez. Photographed by Elgin Lessley, Byron Houck. With Keaton, Kathryn McGuire, Joe Keaton, Ward Crane. (45 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm)

## The General

*Buster Keaton, Clyde Bruckman (U.S., 1926)*

Lyric and comic and, by its very setting, tragic, *The General* ranks as one of the most authentic evocations of the Civil War on film, and one of the greatest comedies of all time. Keaton brought Matthew Brady-like images to brilliant life in a story based on a true incident of the war. Buster is an engineer who is rejected by the Confederate Army and thought a coward by his girlfriend. When a small band of Union soldiers penetrates far beyond Confederate lines to steal a locomotive, he sets off in hot pursuit. The title refers to the engine that figures prominently in one of the most harrowing and hilarious chase scenes ever filmed—in fact it takes up seven of the film's eight reels. Buster's relationship to the train is at least as touching as his love for Marian Mack, and both get rather rough treatment in this wartime setting. A little kiss from Buster makes it better.

• Adapted by Al Boasberg, Charles Smith from a story by Keaton, Bruckman. Photographed by J. Devereux Jennings, Bert Haines. With Keaton, Marian Mack, Glen Cavander, Jim Farley. (85 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm)

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## Sunday July 9

### Buster Keaton Forever

## The Saphead with Keaton/Arbuckle Shorts 5:30

### Bruce Loeb on Piano

Fatty Arbuckle Shorts: More of Buster's comic apprenticeship with Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle (see notes for July 2). **Coney Island** (1917, 22 mins), **The Garage** (1919, 18 mins), **Goodnight Nurse** (1918, 18 mins), and **The Hayseed** (1919, 18 mins).

Directed by Roscoe Arbuckle. Photographed by Elgin Lessley. With Arbuckle, Buster Keaton, Al St. John, Alice Lake. (Total: 76 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm)

## The Saphead

*Herbert Blaché (U.S., 1920)*

Douglas Fairbanks suggested Buster Keaton for *The Saphead's* Bertie the Lamb, a role Fairbanks had played on stage and in an earlier screen version. Bertie, the delicate, pampered scion of The Wolf of Wall Street, tries in vain to become a Sportin' Life to win the love of The Modern Girl. And to prove himself to a rejecting father (*Steamboat Bill*, here we come), Bertie buys a rather expensive "seat" on the Stock Exchange. But he doesn't know one end of a cigar from the other, and his weakness is seized upon by the overgrown *College* boys of Wall Street who torment him. Peter Sellers-like, Bertie thinks it's fun. Buster is equally charming in Chinese silk pajamas or with a hot towel over his face. "He is one of the few comedians who has ever managed to be shy, stoic, and dashing at the same time" (Penelope Gilliat).

• Written by June Mathis, based on the play *The New Henrietta* by Winchell Smith, Victor Mapes. Photographed by Harold Wenstrom. With Buster Keaton, William H. Crane, Irving Cummings, Beulah Booker. (70 mins, Silent, Tinted, 35mm)



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Saturday July 15

Buster Keaton Forever

Bruce Loeb on Piano

## **The Cameraman 7:30**

*Edward Sedgwick (U.S., 1928)*

A newsreel by Buster Keaton of a newsreel by Buster Keaton: with *Sherlock Jr.*, *The Cameraman* is his most self-reflexive film. Trying to “make it” in the Hearst Newsreel Company, Citizen Keaton finally photographs a Tong War in Chinatown and a boating accident, and astonishingly forecasts the issues of contemporary documentary theory. Along the way we are treated to sublime Buster Bits: a one-man baseball game, acrobatic competitions with mass transportation, and a change into a bathing suit in, to say the least, straitened circumstances.—William Nestricks

• Written by Clyde Bruckman, Lew Lipton. Photographed by Elgin Lessley, Reggie Lanning. With Buster Keaton, Marceline Day, Harry Gribbon. (66 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm, From MGM/UA Classics)

## **Spite Marriage 8:50**

*Edward Sedgwick (U.S., 1929)*

*Spite Marriage* is one of the most neglected of Keaton's films. In a way it does for the theater what *Sherlock Jr.* does for film: Keaton's Elmer Edgemont, pants presser extraordinaire, haunts a Broadway theater for love of the actress Trilby Drew. Catapulted onto stage, he turns a Civil War drama into the vaudevillian comic-disaster that is his life. Jilted by her fiancé, Drew draws the willing Elmer into a marriage for spite; only on his wedding night does he realize his true position. Dorothy Sebastian is a marvelous foil for Keaton as an inert and inebriated bride impervious to his ingenious machinations to get her into bed.

• Written by Ernest S. Pagano from a story by Lew Lipton. Photographed by Reggie Lanning. With Keaton, Dorothy Sebastian, Edward Earle, Leila Hyams. (77 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm, From MGM/UA Classics)

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Sunday July 16

Buster Keaton Forever

## **Seven Chances with Short Films 5:30**

Jon Mirsalis on Piano

**One Week (1920).** Buster and his new bride have one week to build a house from an assemble-it-yourself prefab kit. But even the best-laid plans have to be read right-side-up. This is an exercise in deconstruction. And an amazingly clever little film that, among other things, tries on for size *Steamboat Bill's* famous house-a-falling stunt. Also, Buster straddles two runaway motorcycles years before John Wayne did it with horses. With Keaton, Sybil Seely, Joe Roberts.

**The High Sign (1920/21).** This fellow who “came from nowhere, is not going anywhere, and was kicked out of somewhere” is more crafty than the typical Buster. But then he's keeping rather mean company in *The High Sign*: a mini-Mafia whose secret-signing members seem to be everywhere. With Keaton, Al St. John.

**The Electric House (1922).** Keaton, wrongly diplomaed as an electrical engineer, demonstrates the miracles of an all-electric house in a film that looks forward equally to Jacques Tati and Woody Allen. With Keaton, Virginia Fox, Joe Keaton.

• Shorts: Directed, Written by Buster Keaton, Eddie Cline. Photographed by Elgin Lessley. (c. 20 mins each, Silent, B&W, 35mm)

## **Seven Chances**

*Buster Keaton (U.S., 1925)*

In order to live up to the terms of a windfall inheritance, Buster has one day to find a bride. Confidence leads to desperation and finally panic as he is reduced to “proposing to anyone in skirts, including a Scotsman.” *Seven Chances* builds to an outrageous sequence of events which were too absurd even for Keaton's taste and it ranked relatively low in his estimation. But the film is all the more contemporary for its wild conceits. Keaton's influence on Monty Python is nowhere better seen than in the set-piece chase: 500 angry would-be brides of all stripes, some of them even women, pursuing Buster hither and yon into an open field and the heart of a rockslide.



Note: Be prepared, in this and some of the other Keaton films, for racist sight gags of the sort common in many silents and all too many talkies.

• Written by Jean Havez, Joseph Mitchell, Clyde Bruckman, based on a play by Roy Cooper Megrue. Photographed by Elgin Lessley, Byron Houck. With Keaton, Ray Barnes, Snitz Edwards, Ruth Dwyer. (60 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm)

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## Sunday July 23

Buster Keaton Forever

### Steamboat Bill, Jr. with Short Films 5:30

Jon Mirsalis on Piano

**The Boat** (1921). In this strange and surreal comedy, Buster, his wife and kids are all adrift at sea on a boat that refuses to stay afloat. “*The Boat* can rank with Keaton’s great feature-length comedies. No Keaton film previous to it was quite so sustained in its melancholy, or provided such continuous laughter” (David Robinson). With Keaton, Sybil Seely.

**Daydreams** (1922). Another exercise in surrealism with Buster playing doctor, Wall Street mogul, and Hamlet in his efforts to prove himself marriage material. In the end, he is just material, delivered parcel post. With Keaton, Renée Adorée.

**My Wife’s Relations** (1922). Keaton’s satire on the Melting Pot. Drawn into court for breaking a window, Buster winds up married to his accuser by a Polish-speaking judge. His attempts to negotiate a meal with his wife’s many Irish brothers looks forward to Woody Allen’s classic one-liner: “Dynamite ham!” With Keaton, Kate Price, Monty Collins.

• Shorts: Directed, Written by Buster Keaton, Eddie Cline. Photographed by Elgin Lessley. (c. 20 mins each, Silent, B&W, 35mm)

Steamboat Bill, Jr.

*Charles F. Reisner (U.S., 1927)*

The authentic-seeming Mississippi River setting (filmed along the Sacramento River delta) is but one of *Steamboat Bill, Jr.*’s many pleasures. The film seems to have a direct line to Keaton’s youth and soul in the tale of a sensitive, effeminate lad trying to figure out the mettle of manhood in his overbearing dad. Buster with an umbrella against the fearsome storm that rips the houses off people’s lives; Buster drawn, as if in a dream, to an abandoned vaudeville theater: “Keaton’s most entertaining balance of the instinctual and the cerebral” (Sarris & Allen, *Village Voice*). The climax is one of Keaton’s most dangerous and carefully planned stunts: Noting that the hospital in which he lies, and indeed the whole town, has flown, he runs to stand in the street. A wall comes crashing down on him but he passes, untouched, through an open window. Keaton was the true he-man among matinee idols—the scene was done unfaked, with a real wall.

• Written by Carl Harbaugh. Photographed by J. Devereux Jennings, Bert Haines. With Keaton, Ernest Torrence, Marion Byron, Tom Lewis. (70 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm)

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## Sunday July 30

Buster Keaton Forever

### Battling Butler 5:30

*Buster Keaton (U.S., 1926)*

Bruce Loeb on Piano

Based on a Broadway play, the story revolves around a case of mistaken identity between two Alfred Butlers—one, an effete millionaire (Keaton, with Snitz Edwards a delight as his valet); the other, the heavyweight champion of the world (Francis McDonald). Coincidence brings them to the same backwoods Kentucky hamlet where Butler-the-fop finds love with a mountain girl, but not before antagonizing Butler-the-brute into a Madison Square Gardens grudge match. Commentators have noted that the very *unfunny* climactic fight sequence draws on Keaton’s memories of being battered on stage by his father. Luis Buñuel wrote about *Battling Butler*: “A wonderful film. Aseptic. Disinfectant....Here is a great specialist in treating the disease called sentiment.”

• Written by Al Boasberg, Paul Gerard Smith, Charles Smith, Lex Neal, based on a play by Stanley Brightman, Austin Melford. Photographed by J. Devereux Jennings, Bert Haines. With Keaton, Sally O’Neil, Snitz Edwards, Francis McDonald. (70 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm)



# The Railrodder and Buster Keaton Rides Again 7:00

**The Railrodder** (*Gerald Potterton, Canada, 1965*). This film offers a double treat: Keaton's physical humor and Canada's gorgeous scenery from coast to coast. One of Keaton's last films, *The Railrodder* has him crossing Canada in a railroad handcar. He brings along an apparently bottomless box in which he finds everything needed for the trip. Not a word is spoken, and Keaton's sight gags are as spry and ingenious as they were in the days when not a word was spoken. Winner of several film-festival awards including Berlin. With Buster Keaton. (25 mins, Color, 16mm)

**Buster Keaton Rides Again** (*John Spotton, Canada, 1965*). Filmed during the making of *The Railrodder*, in the specially appointed passenger coach where Buster and Mrs. Keaton reside during their Canadian film assignment. In this informal study the comedian regales the film crew with anecdotes of a lifetime in show business, illustrated by excerpts from his silent films. Seven festival awards, including Venice, New York. With Buster Keaton. (55 mins, B&W, 16mm, Both films produced and provided by the National Film Board of Canada)

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## Sunday August 13

Buster Keaton Forever

### Our Hospitality with Short Films 5:30

Jon Mirsalis on Piano

**Neighbors** (1921). Tenement lovers separated by a tall backyard fence and Buster nonchalantly performing acrobatic feats on clotheslines, teeter-totter boards, and telephone poles to reach his beloved. The intertitles offer biting jabs at lower-class family relations but the neighbors will go to any height to help these lovers. Keaton, Virginia Fox, Joe Keaton, Joe Roberts.

**The Haunted House** (1921). Perhaps the most absurd of the Keaton shorts, resembling the French serial *Les Vampires* with its mixture of hyper-reality and diabolical costume play. In a booby-trapped house, villains dressed as phantoms mix with members of a traveling opera company doing *Faust*. Buster takes a stairway to heaven—and a neat slide to the other place. With Keaton, Virginia Fox, Joe Roberts.

**The Frozen North** (1922). Keaton does William S. Hart. "Two-Gun Bill" emerges from a subway kiosk to find himself in the middle of nowhere. With Keaton, Freeman Wood, Bonnie Hill.

• Shorts: Directed, Written by Buster Keaton, Eddie Cline. Photographed by Elgin Lessley. (c. 20 mins each, Silent, B&W, 35mm)

### Our Hospitality

*Buster Keaton, Jack Blystone (U.S., 1923)*

Buster, heir to an Appalachian estate and, along with it, the Hatfield-McCoy-type feud that killed his father, finds the ancestral abode ever so humble, and no place like home. While courting the daughter/sister/daughter of his hulking rivals, he takes full advantage of their hospitality since Southern chivalry prevents them shooting a guest. But it's like an umbrella against a waterfall. *Our Hospitality* is an American masterpiece, at once lyric and frenetic, and a sly satire on the very period setting it creates with painstaking accuracy. "The weekly visit of the kindly parson" alongside other quaint customs like wife-beating gleefully give the lie to Griffith's nostalgia for the Old South. The climactic chase over mountain crest and tor—with a raging river rescue which gently satirizes and finally tops *Way Down East*—is a breathtakingly beautiful observation of the fact that we are all tied to our enemies.

• Written by Clyde Bruckman, Jean Havez, Joseph Mitchell. Photographed by Elgin Lessley, Gordon Jennings. With Keaton, Natalie Talmadge, Joe Roberts. (70 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm)

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## Sunday August 20

Buster Keaton Forever

### Go West with Short Films 5:30

Bruce Loeb on Piano

**The Paleface** (1921). Buster is the Indians' friend but convincing them of this is another matter. In this film Keaton begins to replace the sight gag with the kind of hair-raising stunts that



would characterize the features—all performed without benefit of special effects. Just Keaton and the camera.

**The Blacksmith** (1922). Buster, a village smithy, shoes horses and repairs cars. And vice versa. With Keaton, Virginia Fox.

**The Balloonatic** (1923). A hot-air balloon sets Buster out in nature, which is decidedly unwelcoming, as is Nature Girl Phyllis Haver. Don't try and make sense of it. Just enjoy it as a plotless practice run for the features. Though we can't help seeing a bit of *L'Age d'or*... With Keaton, Phyllis Haver.

- Shorts: Directed, Written by Buster Keaton, Eddie Cline. (*Blacksmith*: Keaton, Malcolm St. Clair). Photographed by Elgin Lessley. (c. 20 mins each, Silent, B&W, 35mm)

## Go West

*Buster Keaton (U.S., 1925)*

Keaton plays a melancholy midwesterner, name of Friendless, who hops a freight train for Arizona, intent on becoming a cowboy. His dream is realized, in a quiet sort of way, when he removes a pebble from the foot of a limping cow, Brown Eyes, and she becomes his constant companion. When Brown Eyes is to be shipped to Los Angeles, Friendless inadvertently accompanies her on a train barreling west. Keaton makes the most of the comedy inherent in a herd of livestock wandering the streets of Los Angeles, exploring department stores and beauty parlors, but for the most part, *Go West* is memorable for more lyrical images such as Keaton and cow walking across a vast plain. Ol' brown eyes finally found a co-star with a soul to match his own.

- Written by Raymond Cannon, based on an idea by Keaton. Photographed by Elgin Lessley, Bert Haines. With Keaton, Howard Truesdall, Kathleen Myers. (70 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm)

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## Sunday August 27

### Buster Keaton Forever

## College with Short Films 5:30

### Bruce Loeb on Piano

**The Scarecrow** (1920). "What Is a Home Without a Mother?" reads the sign on the wall of Buster and Big Joe Roberts' bachelor pad—a marvelously inventive mechanical house designed for effortless living. The two guys also share the same gal. With Keaton, Joe Roberts, Sybil Seely.

**The Goat** (1921). One of the most brilliant and resonant of the shorts. Buster as a marginal figure (poor, hungry) becomes a cipher for a criminal identity—his face is plastered on every wall and billboard as the current Public Enemy #1. Keaton is not above making a Christ figure out of him, though not for long: there's a hilarious chase to attend to. With Keaton, Joe Roberts, Virginia Fox.

**The Love Nest** (1923). Keaton does Melville: love-sick Buster joins a whaling ship with a fearsome captain. With Keaton, Virginia Fox, Joe Roberts.

- Shorts: Written, Directed by Buster Keaton, Eddie Cline (*The Goat*: Keaton, Malcolm St. Clair). Photographed by Elgin Lessley. (20 mins each, Silent, B&W, 35mm)

## College

*James W. Horne (U.S., 1927)*

Following on the rigor of *The General*, Keaton offered *College* to his many fans as a pure laugh-riot, and it is, the more so if you identify (as you must) with Buster's Little Man on Campus: an egghead freshman in an exclusively jock college who, unlike his monied classmates, has to work his way through school. A dreamlike proscenium arch opens onto Buster's field of nightmares as he gamely goes out for baseball, pole vaulting, discus, and crew, all of which will have their practical applications as the film vaults forward on the sheer physical elegance of its gags. Keaton holds no illusions about male bonding or male privilege (nor, we suspect, about that "happy ending"), and *College* remains as current as the day it was made.

- Written by Carl Harbaugh, Bryan Foy. Photographed by J. Devereux Jennings, Bert Haines. With Keaton, Ann Cornwall, Harold Goodwin, Snitz Edwards. (65 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm)