



A U S T R A L I A ' S
silent film
F E S T I V A L ®



January 16 *Let the Movies Begin* 1898- 1916

February 13 *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920)

Saturdays at 2pm

Live music with Kaine Hayward

Sydney Unitarian Church

15 Francis Street East Sydney

(Corner College Street: eastern side Hyde Park)

Saturday at 2.00 – 3.30 pm with refreshments

Digital restorations with live music

Session Ticket \$15

Live musical accompaniment Kaine Hayward

Accompanist: Kaine Hayward

Kaine is in demand as a piano accompanist and has worked as for companies including The Australian Ballet, The Paris Opera Ballet, Sydney Dance Company and The Sydney Conservatorium of Music. As a singer, he has performed at both The Sydney Opera House and Hamer Hall, performed lead roles for Opera Australia, toured internationally and maintains a busy concert schedule.



January 16 Saturday at 2pm

A set of classic short films from the early years of cinema 1896-1916.

“Let the Movies Begin: Classic shorts 1898-1916.” These treasures shall include works by Georges Méliès, D W Griffith and Charlie Chaplin and many more.



- **The Astronomer's Dream (1898) 3 mins Georges Méliès**

"In the opening of this film is seen the astronomer intently poring over his books. Suddenly, in a cloud of smoke, Satan appears and surprises the astronomer. At the command of the Fairy Queen, who suddenly appears, Satan vanishes; she awakens the astronomer and as he goes forward to meet her she disappears. The astronomer is very much excited, and, rushing over to the large telescope he tries to discover by what means she had vanished. The moon now appears, and begins her repast by eating the immense telescope used by the astronomer. The astronomer flies around apparently wild at the loss of his wonderful telescope. Suddenly the moon opens wide her mouth and there comes forth a tot of about five summers. She is immediately followed by two others, and they proceed to dance around the astronomer, and vanish one at a time until but one is left. The astronomer, picking her up, thinking he could keep her... " Written by Lubin Films (1907)

- **The Talion Punishment (La peine du Talion) (1906) 4 mins Gaston Velle**

"This is a sweet little story also known as Tit for Tat where a butterfly collector and his two attractive female assistants are captured by butterflies, who make judgement on the collector, punishing him by pinning him to a mushroom to show him how it feels. He promptly smashes his butterfly net and everyone lives happily ever after!"

BFI

“Another example of the highly colourful hand-stencilled films Pathe were putting out at the turn of the last century, this fantasy depicts the fate that awaits a butterfly collector and his two female assistants as they venture into a wood in which the butterflies are as large as vaudeville actresses in butterfly outfits. The two assistants are transformed into grasshoppers – although this being 1906, the transformation takes place off-screen – while the collector is shepherded to a sort of kangaroo butterfly court where it is decided he will receive a taste of his own medicine by being pinned to a giant cork. It's quite a busy little film, and entertaining enough on its own modest terms.”

IMDB



- What shall we do with the old? (1911) 17 mins D W Griffith

“D.W. Griffith's first film, *Those Awful Hats* (1909), was designed as a comical public service announcement of sorts. A few years later, the director continued to perform public services, but the complexity of his work had evolved exponentially. Much like *A Corner in Wheat* (1909), he is here using cinema to make a profound social statement, this particular issue highlighted in the film's title: *What Shall We Do With Our Old?* After an aging carpenter (W. Chrystie Miller) is fired from his job to make room for young workers, he is unable to find another job, leaving him, penniless, to

care for his ailing wife (Claire McDowell). In order to survive, the carpenter reluctantly turns to crime, but is arrested and brought before a kindly, sympathetic judge (George Nichols). Despite the judge's understanding, it is too late for this elderly couple to be rescued from abject poverty: the wife succumbs to her illness, and the carpenter is left grieve his losses and ponder his lonely predicament.

A Corner in Wheat ends with an image of hope. *What Shall We Do With Our Old?* concludes with an image of despair, a pertinent social problem without any known solution. Griffith doesn't even attempt to propose any sort of resolution, which does admittedly come off as rather hypocritical – it is, after all, one thing to merely acknowledge a problem, and another to try and fix it. But the film is given emotional depth through an opening title that informs us that the story was "founded upon an actual occurrence in New York City," assuring Griffith's undeniable social relevance. Miller is very good in the main role, showing strong emotions in response to his character's hardship."

Shortcutcinema.com



“WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH OUR OLD? (FEBRUARY 1911) One of several impassioned social documentaries Griffith made for Biograph. Although WHAT SHALL WE DO... was not as famous as CORNER IN WHEAT, directed the year before, Griffith worked with even more controversial material. The film was released in part to help put pressure on the New York legislature to pass a 1911 old age pension bill that had languished in the Senate for months. The print shown here is incomplete, but it represents the longest version extant. The scene depicting the old man's arrest after the burglary, as well as the scene that triggers the burglary attempt (the sight of two wealthy women coddling a puppy, which, the old man perceives, is receiving better care than his wife), are lost. “

Flicker Alley

- Mabel's Dramatic Career (1913) 14 mins Mack Sennett



“ . . .Mack_Sennett combines several older comedic tropes in this film to produce a rollicking, and, I would say, unusually sophisticated comedy short for Keystone.

Mack himself plays the bumpkin star of the movie. He is in love with the maid (Mabel_Normand) his mother (Alice Davenport) has hired as help in their rural homestead, and he gives her a ring. Mother does not approve, and lets him know when she catches them together, and she chases Mabel off to her work in the kitchen. Then, a classy “girl from the city” (Virginia_Kirtley) comes to visit (it’s never clear what relationship she has to the family, or why she’s staying with them). Mack suddenly shows more interest in her, to mother’s approval and Mabel’s horror. Mack asks for his ring back and Mabel takes out her anger on the interloper, resulting in her being fired. She heads for the city, to begin her life anew. Once that’s all settled, Mack asks the girl from the city for her hand, and she laughs at him. He looks longingly at a picture of Mabel, finally aware of what he’s lost.

In the city, Mabel happens upon a “Kinome-tograph” studio, where Ford_Sterling is strangling a girl on a bed for the camera. Mabel tries to get a job. The producer and director don’t think much of her pantomime skills, but Ford seems interested. He convinces them to hire her. Now, an intertitle tells us that some years have passed, and Mack’s bumpkin character is paying a visit to the city. He passes by a Nickelodeon, and sees Mabel’s picture on a poster. He decides to pay a nickel and go inside. He watches the movie, and becomes increasingly excited when Mabel appears on the screen! The man sitting next to him (Roscoe_“Fatty”_Arbuckle), tries to calm him down, but he doesn’t quite seem to understand the difference between film and reality. This becomes critical when Ford Sterling, in the role of a bad guy, threatens Mabel and does begin to strangle her. Mack pulls out his gun and starts shooting at the screen, dispersing the audience, as well as the projectionist and piano player.

Now, Mack is out for revenge: “That villain must die.” He goes in search of the man he saw on the screen, and happens to peek in a window and find his apartment. But, there are three small children there! Then, Mabel comes out and kisses Ford. Evidently they are married and happy together. Mack, unsure what to do, points his gun anyway, but an upstairs neighbor prevents tragedy by dumping out the dirty dishwater on his head.

I love any movie from this period that shows us the interior of a Nickelodeon. This one has a lot in common, visually, with “Those_Awful_Hats,” which Mack Sennett appeared in for Biograph a few years earlier. But, the bumpkin-in-a-theater trope goes back further, to Edison films from the early twentieth century. By 1902, we had “Uncle_Josh_at_the_Moving_Picture Show,” in which a yokel from the sticks confuses images on the screen with reality, and that is what Sennett is playing on here, only with a much more complex storyline and better characterization. It also resembles the 1913 film by Louis Feuillade “Tragic_Error,” only with the tragedy averted. This Nickelodeon includes a projector’s booth, a relatively new innovation at the time (often required to be fireproof by newer fire codes that were trying to prevent deadly nitrate_fires), and

a female pianist at the front of the house. I thought it was also interesting that Mabel first signs up for a “Kinome-tograph” job, suggesting that the first part of the movie takes place before the Nickelodeon era.

This movie actually makes better use of close-ups than most Keystones of the next couple of years, making me wonder if Sennett was trying for a more upscale production. Arbuckle is sort of wasted here, just playing off Sennett’s outrageous behavior, but you can already see his potential (he would be paired with Mabel many times in the future), and Sterling is surprisingly understated, especially in the final scene with Mabel. During the hiring sequence, we got the impression that his intentions were less than noble, but I was surprised that Sterling and Mabel are shown married with children as well – rarely do slapstick comedies allow their characters to progress in a relationship. I did feel that the first part of the movie dragged a bit, in comparison to the sequence in the city, but it sets the stage and gives us a chance to know the characters, which is part of what makes the second part work. This is one of my favorite Sennett-directed pictures so far.”

Century Film Project.com

- Suspense (1913) 10 mins Lois Weber





“...a wife and her baby are alone in an isolated house when a tramp breaks in. As the wife tries to keep the invader at bay, her husband happens to telephone and learn what’s happening. He scrambles to return home. He steals an idle car, and its owner, accompanied by police, race after him. We cut rapidly between the besieged mother and the husband’s frantic drive, as he is in turn pursued. Just as the tramp is about to attack the wife, the husband bursts in, followed by the police. The family is saved.

This is the story of the 1913 one-reel film, ***Suspense***, co-directed by Lois Weber and Phillips Smalley.... Smalley and Weber inherit the crosscutting schema, but they go beyond simply copying it. They find ways to revise it, some quite surprising. These revisions aim to create more tension and to dynamize the situation.

Smalley and Weber recast D W Griffith’s parallel editing in several ways..... *Suspense*, by contrast, doesn’t dwell on the telephone conversation but devotes more time (and shots) to the chase along the highway. That’s because Weber and Smalley have complicated the chase by having the husband pursued by the irate motorist and the police

But Weber and Smalley’s tramp sneaks steadily up the stairs, into a menacing extreme close-up.



Elsewhere, *Suspense* gives us close views of the wife and of the door as the tramp breaks in. There are oblique angles on the back door of the house, and virtually Hitchcockian point-of-view shots when the wife sees the tramp breaking in and he looks straight up at her.

What struck me most forcibly on watching the film again was the way in which Weber and Smalley’s daring framings serve as equivalents for parallel editing. In effect, they revise the crosscutting schema by putting several actions into a single frame. The most evident, and the most famous, instances are the triangulated split-screen shots. They cram together three lines of action: the wife on the phone, the husband on the phone, and the tramp’s efforts to break into the house (here, finding the key under the mat).

Split-screen effects like this were common enough in early cinema, especially for rendering telephone conversations. Eileen Bowser points out that the three-frame division was one variant, with a landscape separating the two callers. Her example is from *College Chums* (1907).

But my sense is that in early cinema the split-screen effect was used principally for exposition or comedy, not for suspense. Smalley and Weber have made this framing substitute for crosscutting: instead of giving us three shots, we get one, showing the plot advancing along different lines of action. These splintered frames function much like Brian De Palma’s multiple-frame imagery in *Sisters*, *Blow-Out*, and other films. There’s also the nice touch of the conical lampshade over the husband’s head, providing a fulcrum for the composition.

Earlier in the film, instead of crosscutting between the tramp outside and the wife indoors, *Suspense* gives us both in the same shot, with the tramp peeking in behind her.



A more ingenious revision of the crosscutting schema comes during the shots on the road. Instead of cutting between the father in the stolen car and the police pursuing him, *Suspense* packs them into the same frame. This is done not only in long shot but also in striking depth compositions.



Flashiest of all are the shots showing the pursuers reflected in the rear-view mirror of the father's car as he races ahead of them.

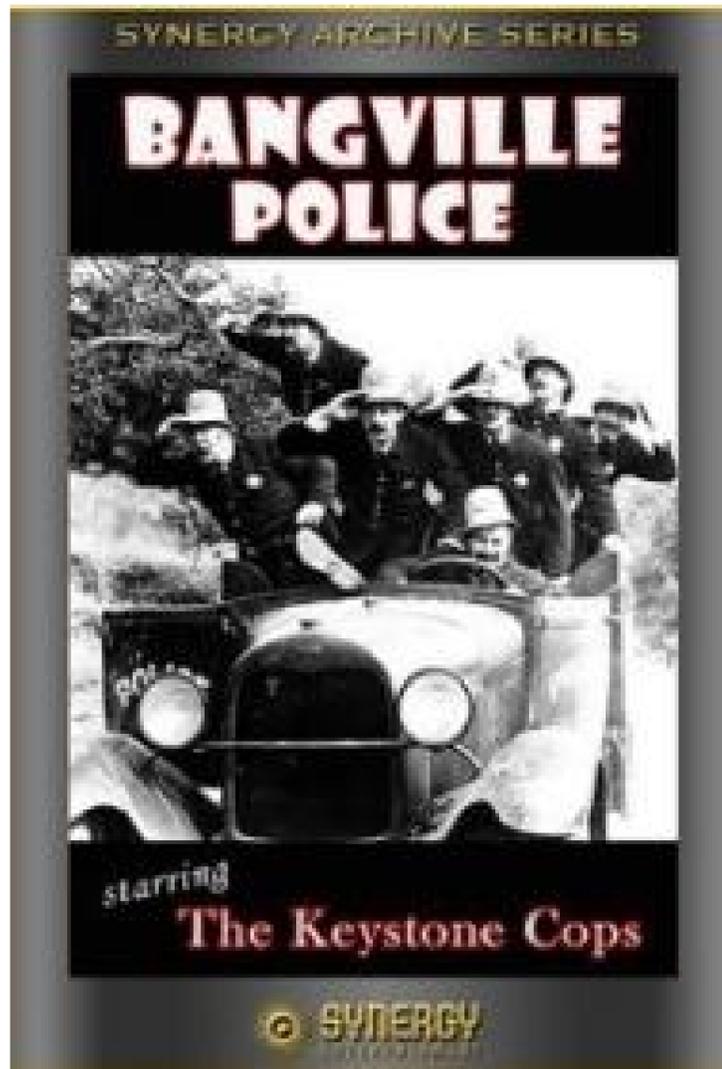


Again, a single framing has done duty for two shots, one of the father looking back and another showing the cops coming closer to him. By compressing several lines of action into a single frame, our 1913 film doesn't need to use significantly more shots than the 1909 one.

These are just a few of the imaginative ways in which Weber and Smalley have recast their standard situation. I could have considered as well the unobtrusive use of the knife as a multi-purpose prop, the echoed shots of mirrors, and the shrewd employment of repetitions in the intertitles.

As in a Hitchcock movie, the fact that we are pretty certain how *Suspense* will turn out doesn't seem to dissipate our anxiety."

David Bordwell.com



- The Bangville Police (1913) 8 mins Mabel Normand



“.... Mabel Normand is a young girl living on a farm with her hayseed father and salt-of-the-earth mother. She longs for a newborn calf to make the place more homey. When she hears strange noises in the barn, she sees two men lurking in the shadows and panics. She runs back to the house and calls the sheriff, who’s sound asleep in bed. He fires off some rounds to attract the attention of the local volunteer deputies and sends them off to investigate. Meanwhile, Mabel’s mom has tried

to enter the house, but Mabel thinks she's a burglar and keeps her out. Mom thinks Mabel must be held hostage by burglars and goes off to get dad, all the while Mabel keeps screaming into the phone and the sheriff thinks it must be an Indian attack or a serial killer or something. So, he rounds up every able-bodied man and the police force's one vehicle.....rushes to the rescue. Sort of. Actually, the car is much slower than the men running and it ultimately breaks down in a cloud of smoke. Meanwhile, mom and pop have so terrified Mabel that she takes the phone and hides in a closet, after barricading the door. They manage to break through and find Mabel, apparently unharmed. The police show up and appear ready to arrest pop for open-carrying his pistol, but then everyone is charmed by the newborn calf in the barn. The end. All of this, by the way, is communicated in pantomime and just two short Intertitles.



Now, this movie gets a lot of attention because of its early use of the "Keystone Kops" (or "Cops"), but that's only incidental. Only a couple of the volunteers and the sheriff himself have any traditional accoutrements of office, the rest are just yokels with shovels, pitchforks, and rifles. The more "traditional" Keystone Kops movies, like "Fatty Joins the Force," always take place in urban environments, and they exploit the police-as-authority-figure trope to humorous effect. This one barely scratches that surface.



It's a very close parody of "The Unseen Enemy" by D.W. Griffith. Mabel Normand even mocks Dorothy_Gish's facial expressions in some shots, and camera set-ups are clear parallels..... Even audiences who hadn't seen Griffith's 1912 movie would be familiar by now with the story: a young girl, trapped alone in a house, uses the telephone to summon help, while a race to rescue her is intercut with her increasing peril. Director Henry Lehrman.....brilliantly turned that whole concept on its head, and used very different camera- and editing-styles from normal to make the satire work. The close-up was generally reserved for opening and closing shots at Keystone, but he needed it in the middle here. Cross-cutting rarely interrupted the story for more than a few seconds, but he needed to draw out the humorous tension of Mabel trapped by her parents while establishing the characters of the titular law enforcers. Even the car, which is now seen as the most traditionally "Keystone Kop" element in the picture, is there because it is part of the parody; unlike the original, it is slow and unreliable. Note that Lehrman, as well as Mack_Sennett the producer, had gotten their start working as actors for Griffith at Biograph."



- The Vagabond (1916) 26 mins Charlie Chaplin
- ““The Vagabond” (released July 10, 1916), is often pointed to as one of Chaplin's first real masterpieces, representing the blend of comedy and pathos that would define his greatest work in films (e.g, "The Kid," "City Lights"). The tramp is a traveling violinist who is competing with an artist (Lloyd Bacon) for the hand of the lovely Edna Purviance, a young girl who has been stolen by Gypsies. The way Chaplin mixes the despair of his character over being rejected as a lover with the comedy of accidentally sitting on a stove captures the essence of his genius as a filmmaker.” Flicker Alley

Motion Picture Magazine: “...Charles Chaplin as of old, with a leaven of serious acting that is very well done...with a series of love misadventures in a gypsy camp. Chaplin rises to the heights....”



February 13 Saturday at 2pm

***The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* – Germany (1920) 72 minutes**

“In the 1920s, Germany was one of the countries pioneering revolutionary new styles in motion pictures, combining cinema with the modern art movements popular at that time. *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* is the result of this blend with modern art and Expressionism, and was an attempt to elevate motion pictures from commercial and popular entertainment to high art and culture.

Essentially a horror movie and inspired by a real-life murder of a girl at a fairground, the story underwent some changes and was originally assigned to legendary German director Fritz Lang, who proposed further changes but had prior commitments. His successor, Robert Wiene, worked closely with artists Röhrig and Reimann, as well as designer Hermann Warm, to create a work of modern art in film, based on the style of the Expressionist group, *Der Sturm*.

The silent film is the perfect medium for such artistic expression due to the emphasis on the visual sense, which in turn brought out more creative expressiveness by cast and crew to convey feelings, moods, thoughts and concepts in various ways. As a result, pantomime is frequently used in German Expressionism cinema, and during the 1920s the style influenced many filmmakers from other countries, Alfred Hitchcock being one of them.

In Expressionist silent films, lighting and shadows were used to create mood and atmosphere, emphasizing strong and deep emotions with heavy shadows and other photographic techniques such as unusual camera angles. The themes were often rather gloomy, heavy or intense, and expressed the culture and mentality of the period, using mystic ideas which were popular at the time. Mysticism, hypnosis and esoteric teachings blend with fantasy and horror in many Expressionist films.

The Cabinet of Dr Caligari stands out as a milestone in German Expressionism and even in cinema history in its attempt to bridge both the popular/commercial and the artistic/intellectual worlds. By doing so, it also set the mould for a certain style within the Expressionist movement, and history shows that it was successful because very few films have attracted so much interest, curiosity and discussion, nor inspired so many filmmakers and directors for decades later.

The Cabinet of Dr Caligari combines an extreme Expressionist setting with a 'narrative' story with which cinema audiences were already well familiar. It is effective because the story is about mental illness, fear and horror, and the painted sets with harsh, angular forms express these feelings and concepts very poignantly. Basically, the film externalizes inner mental and emotional states in a unique and very effective manner.

Although only revealed at the end of the film, the main character in ***The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*** is mentally ill, and the horror story he tells a man sitting on the garden bench next to him turns out to be only an illusion of his sick mind. It is therefore quite brilliant that only the scenes of the imagined story feature unnatural, angular, distorted, threatening and disturbing painted sets and backgrounds. This underscores the fact that this part of the film is a hallucination of a mentally ill person who has a distorted perception of the world.

Apart from all these unique characteristics, ***The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*** also features several giants of the silver screen, Conrad Veidt being the best known star to Western audiences. He was one of the best paid stars of Ufa, the German film production company, before leaving Germany in 1933 to continue his successful career in England and then the USA. In ***The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*** Veidt is unforgettable as the somnambulist under the hypnotic control of Dr Caligari.

The other two stars continued to have very successful and productive film careers in Germany over several decades; Lil Dagover, playing the part of Jane, starred in many silent films and became internationally famous, while Werner Krauss is perfect in the role of Dr Caligari.

Cast and Crew: Directed by Robert Wiene, Written by Hans Janowitz and Carl Mayer, Set designed by Hermann Warm and artists Walter Reimann and Walter Röhrig, Produced by Decla-Bioscop AG

Werner Krauß as Dr. Caligari, Conrad Veidt as Cesare, Lil Dagover as Jane, Friedrich Fehér as Francis, Hans Heinz v. Twardowski as Alan, Rudolph Lettinger as Jane's father and Rudolf Klein-Rogge as the criminal."

Barbara Underwood





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Barbara Underwood, whose notes grace these pages.