



AUSTRALIA'S  
*silent film*  
FESTIVAL

Classic Silent Films with Live Music  
Brisbane 2010

David Bailey on the mighty Christie theatre pipe organ



October 16 @ 3.00 pm

Adults \$15 / Concession \$10

Kelvin Grove State College Assembly Hall  
Cnr Tank St and Victoria Park Rd. Kelvin Grove

Bookings & Information - 0419 267 318  
[www.ozsilentfilmfestival.com.au](http://www.ozsilentfilmfestival.com.au)

Presented by TOSA Queensland and Silent Film Australia Ltd  
[www.tosa-qld.org](http://www.tosa-qld.org)



**SUPPORT TRADEWINDS and EAST TIMOR PROJECT**  
**@ Kelvin Grove**  
**cnr Tank St and Victoria Park Rd, Kelvin Grove**

Silent Film Australia Ltd., presenter of Australia's Silent Film Festival, together with TOSA Qld, are proud to host a season of restored silent film classics and live music to support Tradewinds and its not for profit project in East Timor

**Saturday October 16**

Film screenings commence 3pm

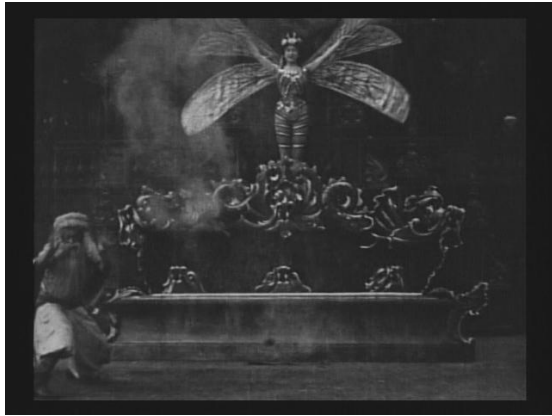
Tickets \$15/\$10 concession

*with celebrated Brisbane silent film accompanist*  
*David Bailey*  
*on the mighty Christie theatre pipe organ*

# Brisbane 2010

## *Classic Silent Films with Live Music*

**The Golden Beetle (1907 by Segundo de Chomón)**



Looking like a scene out of the Arabian Nights fairytales, this enchanting short film is a fine example of the pure escapism and experiments with colour and special effects which were used prominently by the French pioneers of moving pictures.

### **D.W. GRIFFITH**

#### *The Greatest of Film Pioneers*

The year 1908 marked a significant turning point in the development of motion pictures, and D.W. Griffith is given credit for much of these changes and progress towards the 'narrative film' as we know movies today.

Aptly called "the father of film", David Wark Griffith began his career as a bit-part actor in the early 1900's, but his talents and skills soon saw him on the other side of the camera, directing and producing literally hundreds of films which revolutionized the industry in both America and the rest of the world.

Beginning his career as director, writer and producer in 1908 with the Biograph Company, Griffith made a total of 533 silent films - over 450 for Biograph alone, many of which were usually ten to twenty minutes in length.

The art of telling a story with moving pictures developed quickly from 1908 onwards, with Griffith soon introducing much more sophisticated editing techniques, more movement of the camera, and especially filming action scenes outdoors. With cutting-edge editing precision Griffith created nail-biting suspense, building up to a climax, thereby creating the popular formula of many films right down to our day.

The American Civil War was a popular subject in many silent films, being still fresh in the memory of many older people. D.W. Griffith himself had particularly strong feelings about it because his father was a Confederate Army Colonel and Civil War hero, and his childhood was filled with listening to his stories about the war.

Although Griffith excelled in outdoor action and battle scenes as early as 1910, he always combined the war or action/adventure element with a very personal, human and individual story. When World War I raged in Europe, Griffith even went to the Front to film footage of real battles which he later used in his feature-length films about a family's plight during and after the war.

### **In The Border States (1911)**



This exceptionally good film about the Civil War has the usual powerful moral or ethical message which D. W. Griffith always sought to convey with his work. The film also strikes the viewer as being quite realistic, with careful use of period costumes and even street scenes, as well as featuring two talented young child actors.

Since the Civil War was still fresh in the older generation's minds, we can be confident that Griffith's re-enactments and settings were quite realistic, and the viewer feels transported to another period in time when viewing these early short films.

Several filmmaking techniques from this early period of around 1909-1911 stand out in comparison to contemporary films, namely the use of a stationery camera without close-ups, and intertitles introducing the following scenes so that the viewer knows what to expect.

This was the format of all early films because audiences were familiar with stage plays, and often the camera merely captured the same image of actors moving about as one would see on a theatre stage.

It was Griffith who was in the forefront of using close-ups, moving the camera to follow people and action, and filming many outdoor action scenes. Some effective outdoor scenes are evident in *In the Border States*, despite a stationery camera.

The main focus in *In the Border States* is on one of the young daughters of a Union soldier who is called to arms, leaving his tearful family alone in the house which is situated near the border between Union and Confederate territories.

The young child protects an enemy soldier by hiding him in the garden because despite her prejudices, she values human life and honour between people over politics. The soldier is deeply grateful, and not long after this event he has the chance to repay this honourable debt.

Even though wars featured frequently in Griffith's films, he was said to be a pacifist, and despite various themes and stories, his messages of underlying deeper principles, ethics and human emotions always shines through.



## What Shall We Do With Our Old (1910)

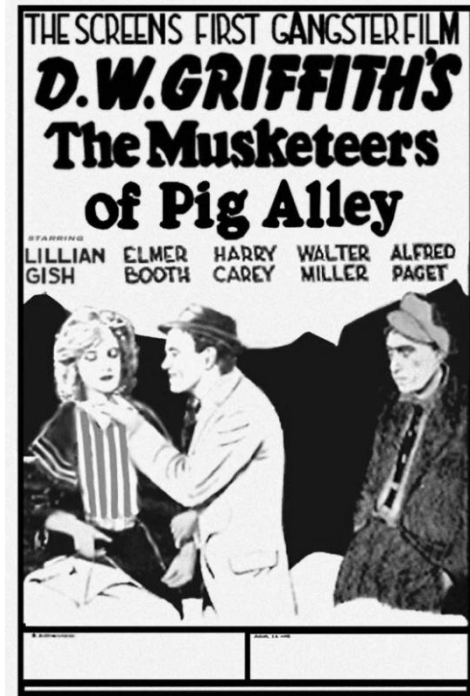


A fine example of D.W. Griffith's "social commentary" type of films which were intended to convey a serious message. Often heart-rending and gut wrenching, this short but poignant film depicts the difficult times before pensions and an adequate welfare system were the norm, and individuals without the support of a family often ended up destitute.

## The Musketeers of Pig Alley (1912)



Hailed as the first gangster film, it conveys a raw realism combined with innovative camera and editing techniques, thereby setting the mould for crime and gangster movies to come. Lillian Gish and Walter Miller star as a struggling couple caught up with rival gangs in the rough part of New York.



**GEORGE MÉLIÈS**  
*The First Wizard of Cinema*

**The Inventor Crazybrains and his Wonderful Airship (1907)**

A good example of how French film pioneer Georges Méliès used tricks, effects, animation and colour at the turn of the century. His innovative ideas are especially suited to dream sequences, such as in this entertaining short film about an inventor of an airship.

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## INTERMISSION

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### GEORGE MÉLIÈS *The First Wizard of Cinema*

#### **The Doctor's Secret (1909) 10 mins**

Already successfully working as a stage magician at the turn of the century, Georges Méliès immediately realized the possibilities when he saw a demonstration of a short film made by pioneering French filmmakers, the Lumiere Brothers. He was quick to adapt his work and stage shows to this new medium.

In order to re-create his magic stage shows, he experimented with special effects to make people and objects appear and disappear in the blink of an eye, and by so doing, he pioneered the use of special effects in films such as multiple exposures, time-lapse photography and dissolves.

Despite many such innovations, his legacy is that of being a magician or wizard of cinema because trick photography to imitate and replace his magic stage show remained his primary focus.

*The Doctor's Secret* is an interesting film because it is an example of the other styles and genres Méliès produced and directed in his prolific career. Besides dream and trick films, which were his specialty, he also made military re-enactments, dramatic narratives and even slapstick comedies.

*The Doctor's Secret* falls into none of these categories, although it has elements of slapstick humour combined with parody. Medical science was progressing as quickly as other science and technology, and it was popular to have all kinds of unorthodox treatments and therapies, both at health spas and sanatoriums, or in a doctor's clinic, as in this case.



Interestingly, there are only three scenes in the near 10-minute length of this film: the doctor's office, a machine room of sorts, and then the doctor's office again. As with most films from this first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the camera was stationery and captured action from one distance only, without close-ups or any other angles.

While this might feel awkward to modern viewers, it was perfectly natural for audiences of a century ago who were accustomed to attending theatres and stage plays where they saw the actors and action in the same way as it is presented in this film.

Often intertitles were used to help narrate the story, or else a narrator was present at the screening of the films, but *The Doctor's Secret* needs no explanations because the bizarre gadgets and therapies performed on the long-suffering patient would have been hilariously familiar to viewers at that time.

Interestingly, the message of this film is still as relevant and effective today as it was a century ago, particularly the last images presenting the fat and unhealthy patient with the sign "Before", and then slim and fit patient with the sign "After".



# CHARLES CHAPLIN

## Easy Street (1917)



In one of Chaplin's more sophisticated short comedies, 'the little tramp' - as Chaplin's onscreen character became known - decides to become a policeman, and manages to do what no one else dares to try, namely to tame the big bully that has been harassing the residences of Easy Street.



**Big Business (1929) 19 mins**  
**Laurel and Hardy (USA)**

Laurel and Hardy have endured as the best-loved comedy duo of all time, and this great classic has yet another style and pace from the above comedies, focusing on a tit-for-tat demolition of a house and car. This short film, *Big Business*, was even added to the Library of Congress as a national treasure in 1992!





**What's so special about Tradewinds?  
[www.tradewinds.org.au](http://www.tradewinds.org.au)**

“Tradewinds is a not-for-profit organization. We aim to bring about a world where access to work and profit is distributed much more fairly than at present, and where the land that produces our food is farmed sustainably. To this end we sell high quality fair trade and mostly organic coffee and tea from producer cooperatives and ethical suppliers in Sri Lanka, East Timor, PNG and now Vanuatu.

We import mostly fully processed products that are packed in the country where they are grown: they are value added products. This delivers greater benefits to the producers and other workers in the countries where they are grown.

The Federal Government recently has granted overseas aid tax deductibility status to Tradewinds. This is approval for Tradewinds to establish an overseas aid gift fund whereby Tradewinds can direct funds to the relief of poverty in countries where we currently source our products and support projects. The first project will be establishing coffee processing for export in East Timor.”

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## **SILENT FILM AND LIVE MUSIC PROGRAM**

**Stay in touch at [www.ozsilentfilmfestival.com.au](http://www.ozsilentfilmfestival.com.au)**

The Festival acknowledges the assistance of Flicker Alley, Film Preservation Associates, Blackhawk Films and Lobster Films in Festival screenings. The world renowned David Shepard has lent unstintingly generous and enthusiastic assistance and guidance. The Festival benefits from and is enhanced by David's warm continued support and his vast experience with silent film.



We acknowledge the support TOSA Qld., American Civil War Round Table Queensland Inc., Alliance Francaise de Brisbane, Dr. Ben Goldsmith and Brett Debritz.

Please visit and read about your favourite silent film with the superb reviews at Amazon by the Festival's tireless supporter, Barbara Underwood-Burkowsky, whose notes grace these pages.