

The Main Feature

Season 40 - Issue 6 - Screening 28 November 2019

Double Bill

Sherlock Junior

USA, 1924

49 min, Certificate: U

Director	Buster Keaton
Writers	Jean C. Havez Joseph A. Mitchell Clyde Bruckman
Cinematography	Byron Houck Elgin Lessley
Producers	Buster Keaton Joseph M. Sche
Cast:	
Buster Keaton	Projectionist/Sherlock, Jr.
Kathryn McGuire	The Girl
Joe Keaton	The Girl's Father/Man on Film Screen
Erwin Connelly	The Hired Man/The Butler
Ward Crane	The Local Sheik/The Villain
Jane Connelly	The Mother
George Davis	Conspirator
Doris Deane	Girl Who Loses Dollar Outside Cinema
Christine Francis	Candy Store Girl
Betsy Ann Hisle	Little Girl
Kewpie Morgan	Conspirator
Steve Murphy	Conspirator
John Patrick	Conspirator
Ford West	Theatre Manager/Gillette



Joseph Frank Keaton, soon to be known as Buster, was born in 1895 during a cyclone whilst his parents were performing in a travelling medicine show. He gained the nickname Buster from his father's partner Harry Houdini. He worked with his father until 1917 when he met and then started to work in films with Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle.

Buster Keaton had intended to use Arbuckle as both a script writer and director in the shooting of *Sherlock Junior*. However an offer to direct Marion Davis in *The Red Mill* gave Arbuckle the chance of significant employment after his fall from grace over the 'Virginia Rappe' affair. The irony was that Davis's lover, William Randolph

Hurst, was the newspaper tycoon whose papers had hounded Arbuckle out of Hollywood. Without his collaborator, Keaton decided that *Sherlock Junior* should move away from slapstick comedy to a subtler style of comedy.

Sherlock Junior starts off as ordinary story of a cinema projectionist who dreams of being a great detective. It moves into magical fantasy when Keaton walks into the screen and becomes the man-about-town detective. What Keaton produced was one of the most brilliantly contrived special-effects sequences in film history. Years later when interviewed, Keaton said with some pleasure: "Every cameraman in the business went to see the picture more than once, trying to figure out how the hell we did some of that. ... We built a stage with a big, black cut-out screen. Then we built the front row seats and orchestra pit and everything else. It was our lighting that did it. We lit the stage so it looked like a motion picture being projected on to the screen."

The film received mixed critical reviews. The New York Times called it "one of the best screen tricks ever incorporated in a comedy". Picture Play said it was devoid of "ingenuity and originality," whilst Variety said it was as funny as "a hospital operating room." In recent times Woody Allen used *Sherlock Junior* as one of his inspirations for the 1985 film *The Purple Rose of Cairo*. In 1991, *Sherlock Junior* was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant." In addition the film was ranked 62nd on the American Film Institute's list '100 Years...100 Laughs' (2000).

Ron Bibby

Ron adds for those members who would like to improve their knowledge of silent cinema:

- If you are interested in the story of silent films then you might want to read:

Hollywood: The Pioneers by Kevin Brownlow and John Kobal
The Parade's Gone By by Kevin Brownlow

- If you wish to see Kevin's ground breaking TV series most of the episodes are on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yS37kyfnGy4&list=PLKTlaW7QgqPZW8zdJgW_QP0lwEwJBCcIG

- If you would like to see silent films with a live musical accompaniment then try the Kennington Bioscope

<http://www.kenningtonbioscope.com>

- Those who get the silent film bug should take a look at

<https://silentlondon.co.uk/>



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La Tortue Rouge (Red Turtle)

France, Belgium, Japan, Poland, Netherlands,
Hungary, UK, Germany, China, Thailand, Italy,
Denmark, USA

2016

80 minutes, Certificate PG

Director Michaël Dudok de Wit
Screenwriters Pascale Ferran
 Michaël Dudok de Wit

Producers Isao Takahata
 Toshio Suzuki
 Vincent Maravel
 Pascal Caucheteux
 Grégoire Solat
 Léon Parahia

Cast:

Emmanuel Garijo	The Father (voice)
Tom Hudson	The Son (voice)
Baptiste Goy	The Son (voice as child)
Axel Devilliers	The Baby (voice)
Barbara Beretta	The Mother (voice)



La Tortue Rouge has no dialogue. It won 'Un Certain Regard' Special Prize, at Cannes and was nominated for the Best Animated Feature Film for the 89th Academy Awards.

La Tortue Rouge is an ambitious east-meets-west endeavour that had been gestating for a decade; it was made at Prima Linea studios in Paris and Angoulême, under the long-distance supervision of Ghibli mainstays Isao Takahata and Toshio Suzuki.

Expectations are high whenever you see a Studio Ghibli ident at the start of an animation. Although *La Tortue Rouge* isn't a home-grown Ghibli film, studio legend Isao Takahata is its creative supervisor, so the influence of the Japanese animation house is felt strongly.

Director Michaël Dudok de Wit deserves just as much praise as any of Ghibli's masterminds when it comes to crafting animated spectacle.

The main theme is of man existing alongside, and sometimes in conflict with, nature. His characters are swamped by swathes of sand and sky that have an irresistible pointillist texture, and the screen is filled with colours as rich and subtle as any cinematographer could produce with a camera.

de Wit also won an Oscar for his 2000 short, *Father and Daughter*.

Jean Benson

Comments and reactions to: **Todos lo saben (Everybody Knows)**

No of reaction slips received = 34

Average score = 6.71

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	~	~	~	1	2	3	8	8	10	2	~

Good pace; gripping and well-acted

Wonderful acting

Intriguing mystery: the ending was even more mysterious

Rather melodramatic

Film so good as to erase the memory of the awful short that preceded it

What a boring film – so slow and so long

Beautifully crafted – totally absorbing

The beginning part set the scene but was rather prolonged, it then got better and better

Caramba!

Deft handling of both characters and plot

Slight but absorbing. Confusing family tree. Ending felt weak

Good suspense, and lovely Spanish atmosphere, but a bit slow

Disappointing ending

Good thriller – not easy to remember who is who

Good cast, good acting

Atmospheric, rather slow in parts, unsatisfactory ending

Too slow a start. A curate's egg of a film – good in parts

A good thriller with some interesting observations, and no extraneous music!!

Excellent acting, particularly Penelope Cruz. Really captured atmosphere of the family

Position	Film	Average score
1	The White Crow	7.29
2	Before the Flood	7.17
3	Stan and Ollie	6.92
4	Ballon (Balloon)	6.91
5	Todos lo saben (Everybody Knows)	6.71

Forthcoming attraction: 12 December 2019



Green Book

A working-class Italian-American bouncer becomes the driver of an African-American classical pianist on a tour of venues through the 1960s American South.

"Viggo Mortensen convinces absolutely as Tony Vallelonga, aka Tony Lip, a New York Italian-American nightclub bouncer with the Tony Soprano brogue, junk-food appetite and grubby white vest, but not the sociopathy. Mahershala Ali is majestic as Dr Don Shirley, the highly educated, exquisitely refined piano virtuoso who hires Tony as chauffeur/protection for a tour into the Southern badlands of unmitigated racist brutality."
Evening Standard