

MIRTHQUAKE

New England's Largest Vintage Film Festival

Thursday, April 17 through Sunday, April 20, 2008

<http://mirthquake.loosertanloose.com>

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'Mirthquake' to showcase silent, early sound comedies

New England's largest vintage film festival runs April 17-20

MANCHESTER, N.H. — The legendary early years of Hollywood will come alive again during Mirthquake, a four-day festival the achievements (and occasional disasters) of the movie industry's pioneers. The festival, which runs from Thursday, April 17 to Sunday, April 20, features three full days of silent and early sound comedies free to the public at the Manchester, N.H. public library; evening screenings of classic silent feature films starring Harold Lloyd; and a day-long tour of southern New Hampshire's historic theaters.

"We planned this year's festival to give audiences a chance to experience the joy of early cinema as it was intended, on the big screen and with an audience," said event organizer Dave Stevenson of Manchester. "Also, our silent films will be accompanied by live music, which helps them come to life in a way that's hard to match at home or on video," he said.

The focus of this year's festival is legendary comedian Harold Lloyd, one of the most popular stars of Hollywood's silent film era. Lloyd, one of the 'big three' silent comedians along with Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton, was known for his horn-rimmed glasses

and 'everyman' character that audiences identified with. His films are known for their superior stories and production values, and often include action, chase, and stunt sequences that retain their ability to thrill audiences.

The day-long screenings at the Manchester Public Library, 405 Pine St., Manchester, N.H. run from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. each day on Thursday-Saturday, April 17-19, and are free and open to the public.

"We're glad to have the Manchester Public Library's auditorium as the home for our daytime screenings," Stevenson said. "It's a great venue, and by making the screenings free, we'll give a lot of people a chance to see unusual and interesting films with a great deal of historic interest. Also, it's a great way to help the library celebrate National Library Week."

Most movies slated for the daytime screenings are silent films dating from before 1930, but will be shown with live musical accompaniment, an essential ingredient for their effectiveness. Nearly 100 short films are lined up to be shown during the three days, grouped under such headings as "The Physics of Slapstick Comedy" and "The English Music Hall Comes to America." Introductions will be supplied by experts in early film history.

Many of the movies are one-of-a-kind prints on loan from collectors and institutions, including the Library of Congress and the Danish Film Institute. In many cases, the films have been preserved, restored, and transferred to DVD for digital storage and projection. Some movies, however, will be shown via traditional film projection.

In the evenings, Mirthquake turns its attention to the achievements of silent film star Harold Lloyd. Each night will feature one of Harold Lloyd's most popular silent films screened in its entirety with live musical accompaniment:

- **'Dr. Jack' (1922)** on Thursday, April 17 at 7 p.m. at the Franco-American Centre, 52 Concord St.,

Manchester N.H., \$5 admission. Romance blossoms when young doctor takes on the case of a wealthy female hypochondriac. Program includes short films prior to feature.

- **'The Kid Brother'** (1927) on Friday, April 18 at 7 p.m. at the Franco-American Centre, 52 Concord St., Manchester N.H., \$5 admission. A timid young man must find the courage to rescue his sheriff father from small-town vigilante justice. Program includes short films prior to feature.
- **'Speedy'** (1928) on Saturday, April 19 at 7:30 p.m. at Red River Theatres, 11 South Main St., Concord N.H., \$10 admission. limited seating. Baseball-crazed youth must fight gangsters to save New York City's last horse-drawn streetcar. Program includes short films prior to feature.
- **'Safety Last'** (1923) on Sunday, April 20 at 7 p.m. at the Palace Theatre, 80 Hanover St., Manchester N.H., \$5 admission. A young man's efforts to make good in the big city leave him no choice but to climb a 12-story building to save his job and win the girl.

"After all these years, Harold Lloyd's films still work wonders when screened as they were intended, on the big screen with an audience and live music," Stevenson said. "Each of our evening screenings will include short films from the era as well. For each program, we're trying to recreate a night at the movies as your great-grandparents might have experienced it."

Other Mirthquake events include a screening tour of southern New Hampshire's historic theaters on Sunday, April 20. The day starts with 'Silent Rarities' on loan from the U.S. Library of Congress at 10 a.m. at the Ioka Theatre, 55 Water St., Exeter, N.H.; \$5 admission. Then, at 2 p.m. the silent feature 'The Red Mill' (1927) starring Marion Davies will be screened at the Wilton Town Hall Theatre, Main Street, Wilton, N.H.; \$5 admission. The tour will conclude with Lloyd's classic 'Safety Last' (1923) at the Palace Theatre, 80 Hanover St., Manchester, N.H., \$5 admission.

"Few people realize that New Hampshire has theaters with historical interest," Stevenson said. "The Ioka was built as a movie house in 1915 by Louis B. Mayer of Haverhill, Mass., who later went on to be the legendary boss of MGM in Hollywood. The fact that the theater exists largely unchanged today is nothing short of miraculous, and it's a treat to show rare 35mm prints on the theater's old-fashioned carbon-arc projector."

Mirthquake was launched three years ago and has grown into the region's largest annual celebration of vintage films. Past Mirthquakes have attracted movie history buffs from

Arizona, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and other locations.

Mirthquake sponsors include HippoPress, The Manchester Express, Looser Than Loose Visual Entertainment, The Manchester Public Library, The Franco-American Center, Red River Theatres, The Ioka Theatre, The Wilton Town Hall Theatre, The Palace Theatre, Back Lot Films and Lunchbox Films, the Taste of Europe Function Room, and Easter Seals of New Hampshire.

For more details about this year's Mirthquake festival, visit <http://mirthquake.loosertanloose.com> or call (603) 624-6094.

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Hi-resolution images available upon request or at <http://mirthquake.loosertanloose.com>

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