

Anchorage Symphony Orchestra

NEWS RELEASE

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Anchorage Symphony Orchestra
Silent Film Night
featuring
Buster Keaton's *The Frozen North* and *The Boat*
Charlie Chaplin's *Shoulder Arms*
Saturday, January 12, 2019 – 8:00pm
Atwood Concert Hall, ACPA

Anchorage, Alaska – November 15, 2018 – It's an evening of Silent Film giants! In 2006, Anchorage Symphony Music Director, Randall Craig Fleischer, introduced Anchorage audiences to Silent Film Night, with Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights* projected on a screen above as ASO musicians performed the score live. Since that first night of laughter, ASO Silent Film Night has become a family favorite. On January 12th (8pm), in celebration of Fleischer's 20th season as ASO Music Director, the ASO will screen not one, not two, but THREE classic comedies in the Atwood Concert Hall.

Opening this night of silent film greats is a Buster Keaton double feature. In *The Frozen North* Keaton plays a bumbling villain who finds himself at the "last stop on the subway," ostensibly somewhere in Alaska. Local audiences will groan at the obvious "frozen north gags" such as guitars used as snowshoes, a man vacuuming the ice floor of an igloo, and the obviously inappropriate dogs hooked to a dog sled.

In this fish-out-of-water story, Keaton makes a departure from his usual roles as a loveable, if not bumbling, character. In *The Frozen North*, Keaton's character is a tough looking cowboy who doesn't seem to have any redeeming qualities. But all gets explained with a plot-twist at the end. Some believe this film influenced, or at least inspired Chaplin's *The Gold Rush*, which was released just three years later.

From the frozen snow to the rising water. The second Buster Keaton film of the evening is *The Boat*. In this sequel to *One Week* (screened by the ASO in 2012), we find Keaton and his family on a voyage in his homemade boat that proves to be one disaster after another. The boat has been built by our hero inside his house, and as he and his family make use of it we laugh at the "anything that can go wrong does go wrong" hijinx that ensue. Not exactly a tale of smooth sailing, the film coined a name "Damfino" which led to Keaton fans being dubbed Damfinos.

No evening of Silent Film giants can take place without Charlie Chaplin; for the upcoming Silent Film Night the ASO has chosen his *Shoulder Arms*. In this WWI comedy Chaplin is recruited to the army's "awkward squad". Posted to the front line in France, he encounters snipers, a flood, food rations, solitude, lice and a French girl in distress. *Shoulder Arms* is the first feature film Chaplin directed, it also stars his real life older brother, Sydney Chaplin.

Many around Chaplin were worried that a comedy about such a violent and bloody war might not be appropriate. Chaplin also expressed some hesitation, but all the worry ended up being for naught. Released just two weeks before WWI ended, *Shoulder Arms* was Chaplin's most popular film, both critically and commercially, up to that point in his career. This led him to do other critically acclaimed films about war, such as *The Great Dictator*.

Anchorage Symphony's Silent Film Night, Saturday, January 12, 2019, (8pm) in the Atwood Concert Hall, Alaska Center for the Performing Arts. Infrared headphones for the hearing impaired are available concert night from the House Manager on the Orchestra Level. Tickets: Adult, \$52-\$28; Youth, \$26-\$13; (prices include surcharges and fees). Discounts are available. To purchase tickets, visit the CenterTix Box Office at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts or www.centertix.com or call 263-ARTS (2787), toll free at 1-877-ARTS- TIX.

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