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HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

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1 Buster Keaton's 'The General,' with live music score, at  
2 Epsilon Spires Jan. 30

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5 TEXT BODY:

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6 A screening of *The General* (1926), one of Keaton's  
7 landmark feature films, will take place Friday, Jan. 30, at 6:30  
8 p.m. at Epsilon Spires, 190 Main St.  
9 "He never smiled on camera, earning him the nickname  
10 of "the Great Stone Face," organizers wrote in a news release.  
11 But Buster Keaton's comedies "rocked Hollywood's silent era  
with laughter" throughout the 1920s.

12 See for yourself with a screening of *The General* (1926),  
13 one of Keaton's landmark feature films, Friday, Jan. 30, at 6:30-  
14 p.m. at Epsilon Spires, 190 Main St. Admission is \$25 per person.  
15 Tickets may be purchased in advance at [epsilonspires.org](http://epsilonspires.org) or at  
16 the door.

17 The screening will feature live accompaniment on the  
18 venue's Estey pipe organ by Jeff Rapsis, a New Hampshire-based  
19 silent film musician.

20 *The General*, set during the Civil War, tells the story of a  
21 Southern locomotive engineer (played by Keaton) whose engine  
22 (named 'The General') is hijacked with his girlfriend on board by  
23 Northern spieswith his girlfriend on board.

24 Keaton, commandeering another train, races north in  
25 pursuit behind enemy lines. Can he rescue his girl? And can he  
26 recapture his locomotive and make it back to warn of a coming  
27 Northern attack?

28 Critics have long praised this film as Keaton's  
29 masterpiece, citing its authentic period detail, ambitious action  
30 and battle sequences, and its overall integration of story, drama,  
31 and comedy. It's also regarded as one of Hollywood's great  
32 railroad films, with much of the action occurring on or around  
33 moving steam locomotives.

34 Accompanist Jeff Rapsis will improvise an original  
35 musical score ~~for The General live on the venue's Estey Pipe-~~  
36 ~~Organ~~ as the movie is shown, as was typically done during the  
37 silent film era.

38 "When the score gets made up on the spot, it creates a  
39 special energy that's an important part of the silent film  
40 experience," Rapsis said.

41 With the Epsilon Spires screening ~~of The General~~,  
42 audiences will get a chance to experience silent film as it was  
43 meant to be seen — in a high-~~z~~ quality print, on a large screen,  
44 with live music, and with an audience.

45 "All those elements are important parts of the silent film  
46 experience," Rapsis said. "Recreate those conditions, and the

47 classics of early Hollywood leap back to life in ways that can still  
48 move audiences today."

49 Keaton, along with Charlie Chaplin and Harold Lloyd,  
50 still stand today as the silent screen's three great clowns. Some  
51 critics regard Keaton as the best of all; Roger Ebert wrote in 2002  
52 that "in an extraordinary period from 1920 to 1929, (Keaton)  
53 worked without interruption on a series of films that make him,  
54 arguably, the greatest actor-director in the history of the movies."

55 "A remarkable pantomime artist," organizers wrote,  
56 "Keaton naturally used his whole body to communicate emotions  
57 from sadness to surprise." And in an era with no post-production  
58 special effects, Keaton's acrobatic talents enabled him to perform  
59 all his own stunts.

60 The Keaton films are a great introduction to silent films  
61 for modern audiences, said Rapsis.

62 "Keaton's comedy is as fresh today as it was a hundred  
63 years ago — maybe more so, because his kind of visual humor is  
64 a lost art."

65 Admission is \$25 per person. Tickets may be purchased  
66 in advance at epsilonspires.org or at the door.

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