

Safer at Home – Day Twenty-Three



April 24, 2020

I spent much of the day running some 8mm and Super 8 film for a client in order to convert it to a digital form so it can be put on a DVD or USB flash drive. I would say that 95% of the film I receive in our studio is silent. The video cameras of the 1970s and 1980s that included a built in microphone were a bit pricey and most families opted for the more reasonable silent film option.

Which leads me to today's topic... What is my favorite silent film?

There's a lot to choose from. My favorite happens to rank #11 on the best silent film list on [IMDB.com](https://www.imdb.com) (international Movie Database). Not surprisingly, Charlie Chaplin directed three of the top four films. But my favorite was not a Chaplin film, although they are all worthy. Instead my choice goes to one of

his contemporaries.

In 1926, the incomparable Buster Keaton starred in a Civil War comedy/action/drama called *The General*. It has long been recognized as a masterful example of its form. A mere 67 minutes long, it tells the story of a train engineer who tried to join the Confederate Army when the war broke out only to be rejected because he was too valuable in his job. But his sweetheart, Annabelle Lee, thinks him to be a coward. When his beloved train, "The General," is stolen by Union spies with Annabelle Lee on board, he must move heaven and earth to rescue both.

Keaton is at his best here with his deadpan delivery making the amazing stunts and action sequences more humorous than we might expect. I heartily recommend it if you haven't seen it. After all, being told to stay at home can have its advantages.

Michael Ondrasik and Home Video Studio Mount Dora specialize in the preservation of family memories through the digitalization of film, videotapes, audio recordings, photos, negatives, and slides. For more information, call 352-735-8550 or visit our [website](#).