Grandma’s Boy (1922)

A cowardly weakling (Harold Lloyd) gets help from his feisty grandma (Anna Townsend) in gaining the courage to pursue a murderous tramp (Dick Sutherland) and fight his rival (Charles Stevenson) for the hand of his sweetheart (Mildred Davis).

SAT, APR 13, 2 & 7 PM

DIRECTED BY Fred Newmeyer

PRODUCED BY
Suzanne Lloyd (executive producer),
Hal Roach (uncredited), Jeffrey Vance (2002 video version)

WRITTEN BY
Hal Roach (story), Sam Taylor (story), Jean Havez (story), H.M Walker (titles),
Thomas J. Crizer (uncredited), Harold Lloyd (story, uncredited)

Cast:
Harold Lloyd as Harold
Mildred Davis as Mildred (Harold’s girl)
Anna Townsend as Harold’s Grandma
Charles Stevenson as Harold’s rival
Dick Sutherland as The Rolling Stone
Noah Young as Sheriff of Dabney County

GRAND BARTON ORGAN: Clark Wilson

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BIOS ON THE STARS OF THE FILM

Harold Lloyd, a comedic icon of the silent screen, is best known for his daredevil antics and his stylish round glasses. The indelible image of Lloyd is from the critically acclaimed “Safety Last” (1923), where he hangs desperately from a high clock tower over moving traffic. He was born April 20, 1893 in Nebraska where he made his stage debut at 12-years-old in “Tess of d’Ubervilles.” After a serendipitous move to California, Lloyd’s father encouraged him to try out for a movie and while on set he met Hal Roach, who would help launch his career. “The King of Daredevil Comedy” developed his signature character, a smart guy who outwits the bad guy at the last minute that always included effortless, yet seemingly dangerous falls.

In 1919, Lloyd was seriously injured while posing for a publicity shot when a “fake” prop bomb exploded, taking off his right thumb and index finger. After his recovery, he was fitted with a leather glove with prosthetic fingers, that allowed him to continue his career, making some of his most well-received films including “Girl Shy” (1924), with Jobyna Ralston, and “Speedy” (1928). His popularity continued with the advent of “talking pictures,” performing in “The Sin of Harold Diddlebock.” Lloyd died in 1971 in Beverly Hills, Calif., of prostate cancer.

Mildred Davis, also known as “Mid” or “Middy” to her friends, is best known for her work as the lead actress in comedian Lloyd’s comedies, including tonight’s feature and his most famous film, “Safety Last!” (1923). Born in Philadelphia, eventually moving to Tacoma, Wash., Davis traveled to Los Angeles to try her luck at becoming an actress. After appearing in a few, small roles, her big break came in 1919’s “All Wrong,” where she got the attention of famed producer Hal Roach, who teamed her with Lloyd. Their first comedy short together was “From Hand to Mouth,” and she appeared in a total of 15 films with Lloyd. In 1921, the pair became romantically involved, marrying in 1923. After they wed, she took a few roles, but eventually retired from movies to raise the couple’s three children. During the couple’s 46-year marriage, the couple supported several charitable organizations and hosted numerous parties at their Greenacres estate. Davis died in 1969 after having had a heart attack; her husband died two years later.

Anna Townsend was a longtime stage actress who turned to silent film late in life where she specialized in comedic grandmother roles, such as her role in tonight’s feature “Grandma’s Boy.” She appeared in three films with Harold Lloyd, including “Safety Last!” She died in 1923.

HOST JOE THOMPSON

Joe Thompson has appeared on Madison stages countless times (plus one if you are counting tonight). He has always been a swell dresser and he likes to eat before he is hungry. Every Monday, Joe sketches waterfowl and recites Zen poetry aloud, but the rest of his week is fairly normal. Right now he is taking attendance … please raise your hand. He is a member of Madison’s sketch comedy troupe “The Prom Committee” and co-author of “Fatherhood, The Musical” with Phil Martin. He is the proud father of three and the lucky husband of one.
VAUDEVILLE ACTS

Wayne the Wizard
Wayne the Wizard has amazed audiences of all ages throughout Wisconsin for over 25 years. This astonishing magician performs his dazzling array of illusions for a wide variety of events. Wayne is also an accomplished ventriloquist and has a number of different characters to fit any occasion. Putting a lot of comedy into every routine, Wayne performs every style of magic and related arts. He has larger illusions, stage and close-up magic.

Jim “Doc the Rube” Carter
Jim “Doc the Rube” Carter has been entertaining in central Wisconsin for over 15 years. During that time, he has performed at the Clown Hall of Fame in Delevan, the Kids Expo in Madison, Pardeeville Watermelon Festival, The Mount Horeb Mustard Festival, the Iowa County Fair, Perkins and Pedro’s restaurants, and Duck Soup Cinema at Overture Center for the Arts.

Doc and his clown colleagues provide stage shows, walkaround clowning, balloon twisting, face painting, deco-twisting, and clown ministry activities.

Recently retired from Covance Laboratories in Madison, he worked as a veterinary pathologist for 25 years. He graduated four times from Kansas State University and still considers himself a Wildcat.

Nedra Bobo (Bobo)
Also known locally as “Bobo,” is an actress who last performed in TAPIT’s “Wit & Wisdom: Monologues of Ruth Draper,” which brought to life the words and sense of humor of “the most famous actress you never heard of.” Bobo also wrote, directed and performed in two original works, “Million Dollar Miracle – The Life of Madam CJ Walker” and “The Turning Point.” Her talents include voiceovers and the rare art-form “hambone,” an African-American rhythm technique that uses the whole body as a “drumset” to produce sound. Outside of theater, Bobo enjoys attending plays, traveling, bowling, and overseeing Capella Realty Group, where she is the broker/owner.

Donna Peckett (Zeeeex)
As choreographer, actor and tap dancer, Peckett also wears the hat of co-producing artistic director and co-founder of TAPIT/new works Ensemble Theater which enriches the community with its original, award-winning works. Peckett, who believes in the power of the arts to foster social justice, holds degrees in art history and anthropology from UW-Madison and is a devoted arts educator as a member of the faculty of Edgewood College’s Theater Department where she teaches Tap Dance: Technique and Multicultural Perspectives.

Mark Hayward
Mark Hayward will do more than “walk the dog” when the world yo-yo champion performs. Hayward, who has traveled the world with a yo-yo on his finger, has appeared on America’s Got Talent and The Late Late Show with James Corden. Most notably, he was part of “Stupid Human Tricks” on The Late Show with David Letterman twice – once using a yo-yo to light matches and again performing a trick with a mousetrap and blowgun to catch and eat an airborne marshmallow. The Madison, Wisconsin native, who majored in art at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, continued his studies in metal smithing at the University of Illinois before leaving school to pursue a career showcasing his unique and crowd-pleasing skills.
GRAND BARTON ORGAN

Like all grand movie theaters built during the Silent Film Era, the Capitol Theater had a pipe organ that allowed a single musician to fill the theater with music while movies were being shown. Overture Center’s organ is a Barton, manufactured by the Bartola Musical Instrument Company in Oshkosh. It is believed to be the oldest Barton in Wisconsin, and the only one in the state remaining in its original location and condition. The instrument is such a rare gem that in 1990 it was honored by the Organ Historical Society as “an instrument of exceptional merit,” the first time a theater organ had been so recognized by the society, which typically reserves such honors for the grand pipe organs found in churches.

Hollywood had premiered the first “talkie,” the year before the Capitol Theater opened, but it took a while for sound films to catch on, and the Barton got a lot of use in the early years of the Capitol Theater. As sound films became popular, the organ was used for sing-alongs and pre-feature entertainment, but as film showings lost their pageantry, this role diminished.

The gold and red horseshoe-shaped console is the most visible part of the instrument, but the organ’s sound comes from 1,054 pipes hidden in chambers on either side of the stage. The large illuminated console and its 141 stop keys and three manuals is usually located at house right. At one time, it was on its own elevator in the orchestra pit. It was moved to make space for the many large-scale productions staged in the theater. A seven and one half horsepower blower in the basement of the theater powers the organ and the massive electrical switching system is sealed in a special room high in the building. This electrical relay is so large that it was put in place before the theater was finished in 1928 and could only be removed with considerable demolition of the building.

The smallest pipes, which produce the high notes, are the size of a soda straw, and the largest are 16 feet tall and 18 inches in diameter. The pipes that produce the deepest notes are 16 feet tall and about 24 inches square, made of thick, knotless pine slabs. Like any wind instrument, the sound comes from air passing through the pipes, but the wind is supplied by a seven-horsepower air pump, rather than a musician’s breath. The pipes are divided into fourteen ranks, or sets, that mimic the instruments of an orchestra.

In addition, a “toy counter” offers special sounds like a chirping bird, auto horn, sleigh bells and percussive effects.

An important part of keeping the organ in top condition is regular use. Overture Center continues to use the organ as part of the center’s Duck Soup Cinema series.

ORGANIST CLARK WILSON

Clark Wilson is one of the most prominent and recognized scorers of silent photoplays in America today. He works exclusively with the Organ in developing accurate and historic musical accompaniments as they were performed in major picture palaces during the heyday of the silent film.

Clark was personally influenced by, and subsequently became close friends with Chicago area organist John Muri, who was an original master of picture accompaniment and practiced his art well into the 1980s. His (and Wilson’s) historic style was that of utilizing fine music as a basis for developing a score of musical value. If the original score is no longer extant, a new one is prepared from the organist’s library and is normally transferred to a cue sheet – somewhat of a “road map” of suggested themes and notated screen actions which keep the organist fully on course.

Wilson began his scoring career in 1980 and has successfully toured North America with hundreds of film presentations at schools and universities, performing arts centers, theatres, film festivals, and conventions. His work has led to performances for UCLA, the Academy of
Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, where, in addition to other pictures, he has repremiered “Wings” for Paramount Studios’ 100th Anniversary, the Chautauqua Institution, Cinequest and San Francisco film festivals, the Los Angeles Conservancy, the Packard Foundation’s Stanford Theatre film series, the Atlanta premier of the restored “Metropolis,” and annual presentations at the Atlanta Fox Theatre and for the Los Angeles Philharmonic Society at the Walt Disney Concert Hall organ. He is the organist of choice for many of the American Theatre Organ Society’s international convention silent film presentations, and he has scored pictures for Kino International for public DVD release.

Clark has been organ conservator and Resident Organist at the Ohio Theatre for the Columbus Associate for the Performing Arts since 1992 and is responsible for all music during the annual classic movie series, which also features one or more major silent films each season. In addition, he has led courses in theatre organ styling and silent film accompaniment at the Indiana University School of Music. He has now developed curriculum and has been appointed to the organ faculty at the University of Oklahoma’s Organ Department, where he teaches applied theatre organ lessons, silent film scoring, and the history of the American theatre organ, the first such program to exist since 1929. In addition to several articles published in Theatre Organ magazine, he has recently authored an article on film scoring for The American Organist magazine, periodical of the American Guild of Organists.
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Event Staff: Stagehand services in Overture are provided by members of Local 251 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees.

Ushering and other services are provided by Overture volunteers. For information, visit overture.org/volunteer or call 608.258.4962.

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Please turn off all electronic devices.

Smoking, including the use of e-cigarettes, is prohibited in Overture Center.

The use of cameras or audio recording in the theaters is prohibited without written permission from Overture Center and the performing company's management.

Food, large bags and other large items are not permitted in the theaters. Bottled water and beverages in Overture refillable theater cups are allowed in the theaters at select shows.

In consideration of audience members with scent sensitivities and allergies, please refrain from use of perfumes, aftershaves and other fragrances.

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forwardtheater.com | 608.234.5001

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kanopydance.org | 608.255.2211

Li Chiao-Ping Dance
lichiaopingdance.org | 608.835.6590

Madison Ballet
madisonballet.org | 608.278.7990

Madison Opera
madisonopera.org | 608.238.8085

Madison Symphony Orchestra
madisonsymphony.org | 608.257.3734

James Watrous Gallery
wisconsinacademy.org | 608.265.2500

Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra
wcoconcerts.org | 608.257.0638