



Alexandria Film Festival

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ALEXANDRIA *Symphony Orchestra*

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Feature Stories and Interviews Available

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Alexandria Symphony Announces “Homegrown” Filmmakers *ASO Presents Six Film Shorts in Partnership with Alexandria Film Festival*

Alexandria, VA—In partnership with the Alexandria Film Festival, the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra (ASO) announces that six filmmakers have been selected to participate in its joint project, Homegrown: American Stories in Music and Film.

The films will accompany music by American composers performed “live to picture” by the orchestra as part of ASO’s 2020-2021 season on November 7 and 8, 2020. The works will also be screened as part of the Alexandria Film Festival on November 12-15, 2020.

Jennifer Higdon’s *Blue Cathedral*, composed in memory of her brother and commissioned for the Curtis Institute of Music in 1999, is reflective and nostalgic. Director Michael Fallavollita will retell his *Tale of the Kite*, which garnered 25 film festival awards, including the Special Jury Award at the 2017 Alexandria Film Festival. The narrative follows a young test pilot stranded in a mysterious desert. As he awaits rescue, his thoughts drift to childhood memories of his grandfather.

William Grant Still was a composer and pioneer within his time as the first African-American to conduct and have his works performed with a major orchestra. He composed his “Manhattan Skyline” in 1957 as part of a larger work, *The American Scene*, which resembles love letters to five regions of America. Film artists Jane Pittman and Annette Brieger will marry the vibrant history of Washington, D.C. and its U-Street corridor once known as “Black Broadway” with its re-emergence as an urban hot spot of street murals, DJs, and dynamic art.

Charles Tomlinson Griffes, prolific in his short life and great uncle to ASO’s Maestro James Ross, composed *Clouds* in 1919 for the Philadelphia Orchestra. Filmmaker Alexi Scheiber will present one of his last and most ethereal works with an experimental stop-motion animation of a cardinal exploring beautiful skylines as a celebration of state birds and the natural world.

An American journey would not be complete without Aaron Copland. His 1940 rendition of *John Henry* celebrates the black folk legend who battles a machine to drive railroad steel. Accompanying the piece is Shannon Washington’s epic film documenting a bone-breaking showdown with Beatyafeet, a D.C.-based Go-Go derived dance transformed into a ballet expressing art of motion, creativity and emotion.

Revised over decades as part of *Three Places in New England*, Charles Ives composed “Housatonic at Stockbridge” in 1911 shortly after he married his wife, Harmony. Utilizing found video footage, artist Tim McLoraine depicts Ives imagining his life to come with his new wife as he overlooks the pastoral beauty of the Housatonic River, deep in the Berkshires.

Originally composed for the 1940 film adaptation of Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Our Town*, Copland derived music from the score for an orchestral suite. Building upon themes of tradition and community, filmmaker Andrea Kalin will set the suite to scenes of our own town—our beloved Alexandria. The visual narrative, which will follow the city as it awakens to a new day, will feature evocative cinematography, rare archival imagery, and most importantly, crowd-sourced footage collected from our community—all of us contributing to why Alexandria is special and allowing the soul of the city to shine through the images of its people.

Subscription packages for the ASO's 2020-2021 season are now on sale, starting at \$90. Military, senior and group discounts are also available. **To order tickets and for more information, visit www.alexsym.org or call (703) 548-0885.**

Filmmaker Biographies

Writer/Director **Michael Fallavollita** started out in the motion picture industry as an assistant film editor for Steven Spielberg. Some of his early credits include *Jurassic Park*, *Schindler's List*, *Casper*, and *Hook*. Oscar Winner Michael Lantieri gave Michael his first feature editing opportunity on his film, *Komodo*. Next, Michael edited for *Back to the Future* writer/producer Bob Gale on his original film *Interstate 60*. Over several years, Michael has edited for Christopher Nolan, Alfonso Cuaron, Frank Darabont, Roko Belic, Kevin Smith, Guillermo del Toro and Zach Snyder on various documentaries, television shows, and motion pictures.

Jane Pittman is an award-winning director, cinematographer and editor based in Alexandria. Her extensive repertoire of short films, feature documentaries and educational/training videos has appeared on PBS and film festivals throughout the world. (*Coming Back to the Hoop*, *This is How Time Passes*, *Prophets Rising*, *In Your Hands*, *The Makeover*). *Coming Back to the Hoop* is in distribution with Random Media, It received the Audience Award at the 2014 Alexandria Film Festival, as did *The Makeover* in 2014. Jane's films are also distributed nationally by Films Media Group, a distributor of social interest educational programming. With a master's degree in music, Jane's work follows a distinct rhythm, lending her films a unique artistic touch.

Annette Brieger is the Senior Producer for the Washington, D.C. bureau of ZDF German Television. She has been a broadcast journalist for thirty years, working both in the United States and Germany, covering Washington politics and presidential elections, major events like Hurricane Katrina and the Salt Lake City Olympics, and the financial crash of 2008. Annette and Jane have been collaborating on numerous projects in the independent film community and not-for-profit world for many years. Their artistic collaboration has produced a number of critically acclaimed and award-winning documentaries.

Alexi Scheiber graduated Maryland Institute College of Art with an Animation major and a dual minor in illustration and creative writing. Her work spans many mediums but is tied together by two central components: an attention to handcraft in the execution, and a sense of love and optimism, even when

handling darker themes. Alexi enjoys combining high fantasy and quiet moments in her work, balancing wonder and intimacy. She learned to paint in watercolors, and while she enjoys other mediums, nothing comes close so far as texture and organic expression. She believes watercolor's flexibility lends itself to interdisciplinary work. Alexi is interested in many varieties of creative work, particularly opportunities in Multimedia Animation, Art Education, and Book Illustration. She is always looking to learn new skills.

Shannon Washington also known as Shannondoah, a childhood nickname given to her by her late cousin, was born in Boston, MA and lives in the Washington, D.C. metro area. She is a student of the arts with a multidisciplinary background spanning across the gamut of visual storytelling and branding. Her career started in 2006 as a freelance designer; however, from the moment she could dream, she has been enveloped in the wonders of creativity. Shannon's love for cinema originates from the whimsical wonderings of classics such as *The Wizard of Oz* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and the melodic storytelling of *Crooklyn* and *Do the Right Thing*. Shannon uses these influences along with principles of psychology to craft content that resonates with her audience in an intimately visceral way. Shannon approaches her films and scripted series with a blend of intellect, humor, wit, and emotion. Her goal is for each individual to feel impacted by every project she creates. Shannon is driven by artistic expression. Her philosophy of being constantly curious and perpetually evolving is a staple of the content she produces and the hallmark to her everyday life.

Tim McLoraine is an artist and musician who creates video art for collaborative performance and installations. His work has shown in concert halls, opera stages, and galleries. Notable collaborations include *Salome Dances for Peace* (Terry Riley) with the Ruysdael Quartet, *Miraculous Mandarin* (Bartók) with the Columbus Symphony, *Cunning Little Vixen* (Janáček) with the New York Philharmonic, *Orphic Moments* at National Sawdust in Brooklyn, *Abduction from the Seraglio* (Mozart) performed at the Teatro del Lago in Chile, and *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (Weill) at the Tanglewood Music Center. His solo exhibition *Hindsight: stories and loops* debuted at the Dupont Underground in Washington, D.C., and his video installation *all that we see or seem* was shown at the 39th Street Gallery in Maryland. In addition to his art practice, Tim performs regularly with the musical duo Fine.

Andrea Kalin is the creative visionary and founder of Spark Media, a production company dedicated to crafting stories with a strong social conscience. Her films have aired on major networks around the globe, screened theatrically to sold-out audiences, and earned more than 100 industry awards, including a Prime Time Emmy, and Golden Globe and WGA nominations. Andrea specializes in bringing to viewers the emotional front line where lives of courage, perseverance and dignity transcend seemingly insurmountable hardships. *Scattering CJ* is her 12th documentary feature. Other recent films include: *First Lady of the Revolution*, *Red Lines*, and *No Evidence of Disease*. Her diverse filmography also includes: Smithsonian Channel's *Worlds of Sound* and *Soul of a People: Writing America's Story*; PBS's *Prince Among Slaves*, *Talking Through Walls*, and *The Pact*, and a theatrical release, *Allah Made me Funny*, starring Mo Amer. Kalin's debut, *Partners of the Heart*, narrated by Morgan Freeman, was aired on PBS' "American Experience," won the Erik Barnouw Award for Best History Documentary, and inspired the award-winning HBO original, *Something the Lord Made*, starring Alan Rickman and Mos Def. Andrea believes that all her films reflect a common spark: an inspired—and inspiring—impulse to shine a light on the unexpected and to share stories that become a part of who we are and how we see our world. *Scattering C.J.* will be featured at the 2020 Alexandria Film Festival this November.