

BROOKFIELD  
PLACE

# *Silent Films / Live Music*

CURATED BY JOHN SCHAEFER

WINTER GARDEN | 7:30 PM



*Experience three evenings of classic silent films  
accompanied by live music in the Winter Garden.*



BFPL

## STATEMENT BY CURATOR JOHN SCHAEFER:

Silent films were never really silent. Throughout the 1910s and 20s, these movies would be shown with live musicians, often improvising or incorporating popular songs and classical music. Since the turn of this century, we've been presenting silent films in the Winter Garden at Brookfield Place with live music from some of today's most adventurous musicians, who extend that tradition with their own scores. This annual series has been popular for a couple of reasons: the Winter Garden atrium, with its huge size, live palm trees, and dramatic lighting, dwarfs even the grandest of the old-time movie palaces – to say nothing of today's tiny screens. And hearing new instrumental music in this setting is an easy way to enter the world of contemporary composition. Plus, we record the performances for broadcast on WNYC's "New Sounds."

This year's silent films include two of the all-time classics as well as a contemporary silent film created specifically with the live musicians in mind. The latter is "Electric Appalachia," put together by Eric Dawson, the director at TAMIS – the Tennessee Archive of Moving Image and Sound. Using archival footage, he offers "a meditation on electricity and modernity in East Tennessee" – which sounds like a dull afternoon on PBS but turns out to be a surprisingly engaging, even poignant film. Guitarist William Tyler and the suddenly ubiquitous harpist Mary Lattimore add a moving, occasionally cosmic score. After that, the extraordinary guitarist Yasmin Williams (you'll have to see her play to understand what makes her extraordinary) will give us the world premiere of a new score to the Charlie Chaplin classic "The Kid." This wonderful film is both funny and deeply humane – and also stars a young Jackie Coogan in his first role. Finally, we have "The Passion Of Joan Of Arc," which regularly tops the lists of the best silent films and which is considered one of the best films of any kind. Composer David Cieri has written music for many of Ken Burns' documentaries, among others, and brings a sizable ensemble of instruments and vocalists to this grand finale of our 2023 series.



## SCREENING SCHEDULE:

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25 AT 7:30 PM:

*Electric Appalachia – Scored and performed by Mary Lattimore and William Tyler (NY Premiere)*

Film by Eric Dawson

Film duration: 60 minutes

Using found archival footage, the film offers a meditation on electricity and modernity in East Tennessee.

Score written for harp and guitar.

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### THURSDAY, JANUARY 26 AT 7:30 PM:

*Charlie Chaplin's The Kid – Scored and performed by Yasmin Williams (World Premiere)*

Directed by and starring Charlie Chaplin

Film duration: 53 minutes

Chaplin's first full-length film as a director is a funny and deeply humane classic.

Score written for solo guitar

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### FRIDAY, JANUARY 27 AT 7:30 PM:

*The Passion of Joan of Arc – Scored and performed by David Cieri and ensemble*

Directed by Carl Theodor Dreyer and starring Renée Jeanne Falconetti

Film duration: 82 minutes

This landmark film, one of the finest in cinema history, tells the story of the trial of France's patron saint.

Score written for eight piece chamber group with vocalists. Ensemble: David Cieri (piano), Sam Ospovat (drums), Mike Brown (double bass), Trina Basu (violin), Chris Rodriguez (bagpipes), Shazad Ismaily (electronics), Tenores de Aterúe: Avery Book, Gideon Crevoshay, Carl Linich, Doug Paisley (vocals).

## ABOUT JOHN SCHAEFER

John Schaefer is the host and producer of WNYC's long-running new music show New Sounds ("The #1 radio show for the Global Village" – Billboard), founded in 1982, and its innovative Soundcheck podcast, which has featured live performances and interviews with a variety of guests since 2002. He created the New Sounds Live concert series in 1986, which features new works, commissioned pieces, and a special series devoted to live music for silent films. Done largely at Brookfield Place and Merkin Concert Hall in NY, the series continues to this day.

Schaefer has written extensively about music, including the book New Sounds: A Listener's Guide to New Music (Harper & Row, NY, 1987; Virgin Books, London, 1990); the Cambridge Companion to Singing: World Music (Cambridge University Press, U.K., 2000); and the TV program Bravo Profile: Bobby McFerrin (Bravo Television, 2003). He has also written about horse racing (Bloodlines: A Horse Racing Anthology, Vintage, NY 2006), hosted panels for the World Science Festival, and been a regular panelist on the BBC's soccer-based program Sports World.



## ABOUT MARY LATTIMORE

Mary Lattimore is a harpist and composer living in Los Angeles. She experiments with her Lyon and Healy Concert Grand harp and effects. Her solo debut, *The Withdrawing Room*, was released in 2013 on Desire Path Recordings. Lattimore also writes harp parts for songs and recordings, performing and recording with such great artists as Meg Baird, Thurston Moore, Sharon Van Etten, Jarvis Cocker, Kurt Vile, Steve Gunn, Ed Askew and Fursaxa.

Her 2014 record *Slant of Light* with guitarist/synth player/producer Jeff Zeigler was released by Thrill Jockey, which was followed by the two collaborating on a track for *Ghostly Swim 2*. Mary and Jeff also composed a score to Philippe Garrel's 1968 experimental silent film *Le Reveleateur*, and debuted it in Marfa, Texas along with the film. Her debut solo record for Ghostly International, *At The Dam*, was recorded during stops along a road trip across America and released in March 2016. The next year, she compiled sounds from her past life in Philadelphia for a cassette tape titled *Collected Pieces*. Following an appearance at Moogfest, she was invited by Sigur Ros to perform at their festival, *Norður og niður*, in Iceland. During a break from those events, she was awarded a residency at the Headlands Center for the Arts in San Francisco, where she recorded *Hundreds of Days*.

Released in May 2018 to acclaim from the likes of NPR, Pitchfork, and *The New Yorker*, *Hundreds of Days* presented an expression of mystified gratitude for the natural world. She capped off the banner year — which included international tours with Iceage and Kurt Vile, a performance with Harold Budd at Big Ears Festival, and an appearance on Billboard's New Age charts — with two collaborative albums released on Three Lobed Recordings, one with Meg Baird and the other with Mac McCaughan. In January 2019, she shared *Hundreds of Days Remixes*, a collection featuring reworks by Steve Moore, Jónsi, Julianna Barwick, Alex Somers, Paul Corley, and others.

*Silver Ladders*, her third LP on Ghostly, sees Lattimore arriving at her most confident work to date, expanding her style of instrumental storytelling with the help of producer and guitarist Neil Halstead (Slowdive, *Mojave 3*). Recorded in Halstead's studio near an old English surftown just before lockdown, the songs on *Silver Ladders* reflect Lattimore's vivid memories against the gloom and glimmer of the ocean.



## ABOUT WILLIAM TYLER

*"William Tyler* and I bonded early in our relationship over Barry Hannah, a hellraising writer from Mississippi who practically reinvented the way that words could be assembled on a page. Like Hannah, William Tyler knows the South—as a crucible of American histories and cultures, an entity capable of expansive beauty and incomprehensible violence, often in the same beat—as his native place, the place that holds him and that he runs from. In the music of William Tyler, the South is not apart from America; the South is America condensed. And like Hannah—and this part is important—William moved to California, where *Goes West* was written. We don't know how long William will stay—Hannah lasted just a couple of years, writing in the employ of director Robert Altman—but the change of scenery seems to suit him.

*Goes West* marks a sort of narrowing of focus for William's music; it sounds as though he found a way to point himself directly towards the rich and bittersweet emotional center of his music without being distracted by side trips. Perhaps this is down to the fact that William only plays acoustic guitar on the album, a clear and conscious decision considering that he is one of Nashville's great electric guitarists. The band that performs *Goes West* alongside William—including guitarists Meg Duffy and Bill Frisell, bassist and producer Brad Cook, keyboardist James Wallace, drummer Griffin Goldsmith, and engineer Tucker Martine—is the best and most sympathetic group of players that William could have assembled to play these songs." – M.C. Taylor



## ABOUT DAVID CIERI

*David Cieri*, a musician and composer, makes music for film, concert, and album release. Cieri has worked with numerous celebrated filmmakers including Ken Burns, the Ewers Brothers, and Barak Goodman. He has recorded fourteen acclaimed albums under his own name, that last six of which were released by Ropeadope Records. He has collaborated on a major live documentary project with the two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage and has made two records with the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Yusef Komunyakaa. David wrote and performed the live scores for the first three seasons of *The Paris Review* podcasts. He teaches courses on Film Scoring and Music for Film at The City College of New York.

## ABOUT YASMIN WILLIAMS

Yasmin Williams sits on her leather couch, her guitar stretched across her lap horizontally with its strings turned to the sky. She taps on the fretboard with her left hand as her right hand plucks a kalimba placed on the guitar's body. Her feet, clad in tap shoes, keep rhythm on a mic'd wooden board placed under her. Even with all limbs in play, it's mind boggling that the melodic and percussive sounds that emerge are made by just one musician, playing in real time. With her ambidextrous and pedidextrous, multi-instrumental techniques of her own making and influences ranging from video games to West African griots subverting the predominantly white male canon of fingerstyle guitar, Yasmin Williams is truly a guitarist for the new century. So too is her stunning sophomore release, *Urban Driftwood*, an album for and of these times. Though the record is instrumental, its songs follow a narrative arc of 2020, illustrating both a personal journey and a national reckoning, through Williams' evocative, lyrical compositions.

A native of northern Virginia, Williams, now 24, began playing electric guitar in 8th grade, after she beat the video game *Guitar Hero 2* on expert level. Initially inspired by Jimi Hendrix and other shredders she was familiar with through the game, she quickly moved on to acoustic guitar, finding that it allowed her to combine fingerstyle techniques with the lap-tapping she had developed through *Guitar Hero*, as well as perform as a solo artist. By 10th grade, she had released an EP of songs of her own composition. Deriving no lineage from "American primitive" and rejecting the problematic connotations of the term, Williams' influences include the smooth jazz and R&B she listened to growing up, Hendrix and Nirvana, go-go and hip-hop. Her love for the band Earth, Wind and Fire prompted her to incorporate the kalimba into her songwriting, and more recently, she's drawn inspiration from other Black women guitarists such as Elizabeth Cotten, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, and Algia Mae Hinton. On *Urban Driftwood*, Williams references the music of West African griots through the inclusion of kora (which she recently learned) and by featuring the hand drumming of 150th generation djeli of the Kouyate family, Amadou Kouyate, on the title track. Since its release in January 2021, *Urban Driftwood* has been praised by numerous publications such as *Pitchfork*, *Rolling Stone*, *The Washington Post*, *NPR Music*, *No Depression*, *Paste Magazine*, and many others.

## ABOUT BROOKFIELD PLACE:

Brookfield Place (BFPL) New York is one of Brookfield's most iconic place making destinations that brings together modern office space, cultural experiences, curated dining, and world-class shopping. One of New York City's most dynamic districts, Brookfield Place is a step away from the everyday and in step with the latest in global and local culture. The 14-acre, 5-building complex on the Hudson River in Lower Manhattan is home to some of the world's most innovative companies and one of New York's most celebrated experiential, culinary and shopping destinations. Brookfield animates its grand indoor and outdoor public spaces year-round through a mix of culture and events, bringing together a diverse array of New Yorkers and visitors. From waterfront cafes along the North Cove Marina to palm trees inside the famed Winter Garden, art installations to live music, Brookfield Place New York is a setting for discovery and inspiration, savoring and indulging, relaxing, and socializing. Learn more at [BFPLNY.com](https://www.bfplny.com).

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## ABOUT ARTS BROOKFIELD:

Arts Brookfield supports innovation in music, dance, theater, film, and visual art by pushing boundaries to create unique works of art and cultural experiences presented for free. Thriving for over three decades, the program gathers communities around creativity by animating the public spaces of Brookfield Properties.

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