

Andrew Earle Simpson

Biography

Andrew Earle Simpson is an acclaimed composer, pianist, organist, and conductor who seeks organic connections between music and other disciplines. A composer of opera, silent film, theatrical, orchestral, chamber, vocal and choral music, he describes his work as “humanistic music,” making multi-faceted connections between music, literature, visual art, theater, and film, reflecting his fundamental interest in contextualizing music in the wider world. His creative, performative, and scholarly work is focused on four principal threads: Greco-Roman antiquity and modern Greece; silent film music; theatrical music, including opera; and folk music. These threads frequently overlap and intersect in his work.

Silent film, as a nexus of drama, visual art, and music, is an ideal genre for Simpson’s multi-disciplinary explorations. One of American’s foremost silent film musicians, he is Resident Film Accompanist for the National Gallery of Art and a regularly featured accompanist for the Library of Congress’ Mt. Pony Theater. He has performed original film scores at the Giornate del Cinema Muto in Pordenone, Italy, the Cineteca Nazionale’s Cinema Trevi in Rome, Sala Cecelia Meireles in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, American Film Institute Silver Theater, New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, the J. Paul Getty Villa in Los Angeles, and many other venues. He is also co-founder of the Snark Ensemble, a group devoted to creating and performing new scores for silent film, theater, and dance.

Interested in the interplay of sound and image, Simpson has worked with visual artists and digital animators such as NY-based Sharon Loudon, DC-based Micheline Klagsbrun, and Chicago-based Nicholas Ferrario, to create and present new work at art galleries and concert halls. In some cases, music is scored to pre-existing video; in other projects, the video is created in response to the music; he has created fully-composed, improvised, and flexible scores to partner such animations.

He has also directed collaborative film/music/theatrical events such as “The Comic Roach: A Roadhouse Picture Show,” a silent film cabaret which he conceived and scripted, and “Silent Explosions, Invisible Jumps,” in which choreographers, dancers, composers and instrumentalists joined forces to present new choreography inspired by new music inspired by silent films of French film pioneer George Méliès.

Simpson’s instrumental chamber, choral, and silent film music is recorded on Naxos, Albany, Capstone, Fleur de Son Classics, Athena, and other labels. His silent film scores have been broadcast on the Turner Classic Movies Channel, and numerous scores for piano solo and chamber ensemble appear on DVD with Kino-Lorber, Flicker Alley, Olive Films, and All Day Entertainment.

Andrew Simpson is Ordinary (Full) Professor of Music at the Benjamin T. Rome School of Music of The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

More information and work samples: <http://andrewsimpson.com>

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