

Disobedient Films Presents

LONDON SYMPHONY

A Poetic Journey Through the Life of a City



UK DVD RELEASE DATE: 12th FEBRUARY 2018

Directed & Edited by **Alex Barrett**
Produced by **Katharine Round**
Featuring Music by **James McWilliam**

2017 | United Kingdom | HD | B&W | 1.33:1 | Stereo | 72 minutes

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

LONDON SYMPHONY is a brand new silent film - a city symphony - which offers a poetic journey through the city of London. It is an artistic snapshot of the city as it stands today, and a celebration of its culture and diversity.

LONG SYNOPSIS

LONDON SYMPHONY is a brand new silent film - a city symphony - which offers a poetic journey through the city of London. It is an artistic snapshot of the city as it stands today, and a celebration of its culture and diversity. The film is divided into four parts, corresponding to the four movements of a musical symphony.

FIRST MOVEMENT: The first movement (morning) begins by looking at construction in the city, moving from the capital's oldest buildings to its newest, via shots of current building work. This contrast, between old and new, runs throughout the movement: old and new tube stations, old and new newspaper printing, and old and new housing (and the 'social cleansing' that goes with it). From there, the film shows old and new boats on the river, before moving on to explore London from above. The movement ends with a look at some of the capital's many monuments – another reminder of the city's past.

SECOND MOVEMENT: The second movement (morning-midday) explores the city's quieter spaces, from its green parks to its agricultural fairs and markets. It then explores the vast array of food on offer in the city, celebrating this diversity while not shying away from inequality and the capital's dependence on foodbanks and charitable food.

THIRD MOVEMENT: The third movement (afternoon) explores the way people use the city, from the huge number of religions which peacefully co-exist, to the way other people worship money and work, to shopping, to culture, museums and education.

FOURTH MOVEMENT: The fourth movement (afternoon-evening) takes a trip along the Thames from East to West, exploring each of the bridges found along the way, before looking at the city in the rain. Finally, the film concludes with a look at evening events, and the city at night.

ABOUT THE 'CITY SYMPHONY' GENRE

LONDON SYMPHONY is a contemporary 'city symphony', a genre of creative non-fiction that flourished in the 1920s and consisted of works that attempted to build poetic portraits of city life. Today, the best known example is Dziga Vertov's MAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA (1929).

As well as serving as a form of virtual tourism, city symphonies raise important and universal questions about the nature of community life – questions that have become vital within the current political climate.

LONDON SYMPHONY'S September release will coincide with the 90th anniversary of Walter Ruttmann's BERLIN, SYMPHONY OF A GREAT CITY (1927), one of the most important examples of the original city symphonies. Ruttmann was one of the great pioneers of experimental film, and Barrett and McWilliam have worked hard to bring a similar sense of poetic playfulness to LONDON SYMPHONY, while also updating the form for the 21st Century.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

LONDON SYMPHONY is a love letter to a city, but it is also a film about life in the modern era. By quietly observing the city, and the inhabitants who move quickly through it, I have attempted to capture something of life today, making LONDON SYMPHONY a meditation on the specific (pre-Brexit) moment in which it was made. You could almost call it a time capsule, if you will, for the city as it stands today – a day when, like many cities, London faces a challenge to its identity within the current political climate. As the years go by, this aspect will no doubt gain in importance, but in acknowledging this one must not overlook the film's strong contemporary relevance.

Indeed, in choosing to make the film in a style associated with the filmmakers of the 1920s, I have attempted to shine a new light on contemporary life, by looking at it through the lens of the past – much as historians make recourse to the past to make sense of the present.

In many ways, the film takes modernity as one of its central themes – not only by illustrating the changing face of London, but also through the fabric of its form. As we head further into the second decade of the 21st Century, London (and its skyline) continue to evolve, becoming something of a clash of styles, cultures and histories – and by using new digital technology to shoot a silent city symphony, a similar clash emerges through form itself.

Moving beyond questions of form, the film celebrates the potpourri nature of modern-day London by revelling in the cosmopolitan spirit of the city and its architecture. At a time when an increasingly bitter and divisive state of mind surges around the world, I hope that LONDON SYMPHONY will be seen as an important statement on unity and equality. After all, as the film illustrates, London is all the richer for the myriad of multicultural influences and styles it contains, and all the poorer for the economic divide within.

But the film, of course, also offers simpler aesthetic pleasures – and I hope that, whatever the thematic underpinnings, people can also sit back and simply enjoy the rhythm and motion of this little symphonic celebration.

- Alex Barrett

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

ALEX BARRETT - DIRECTOR/EDITOR/CINEMATOGRAPHER

Alex Barrett is an independent filmmaker whose works collectively have been screened at over 70 international festivals and won eleven awards, including 'Best Lo-Budget Film' at the London Short Film Festival (for PAINTBRUSH: THE EPITAPH), 'Stoli Emerging Filmmaker Award' at the Babelgum Online Film Festival (for HUNGERFORD: SYMPHONY OF A LONDON BRIDGE) and 'Jury Award' at the Mexico International Film Festival (for LIFE JUST IS). His debut feature, LIFE JUST IS, was released theatrically in the UK in 2012, after being nominated for the Michael Powell Award for Best British Film at the Edinburgh International Film Festival in June 2012, where it was also selected for the 'Best of the Fest' screenings. *Sight & Sound* contributor Brad Stevens called the film "one of the most promising debuts in contemporary cinema", while the home video release was acclaimed as Mark Kermode's 'DVD of the Week' in both *The Observer* and on BBC News 24. www.alexbarrett.net, @albaztk

KATHARINE ROUND - PRODUCER

Katharine Round is a filmmaker and artist with over seventeen years' experience in creative documentary for broadcast & cinema. After 19 years as a director, producer and development executive for major UK broadcasters including Channel 4, the BBC and Discovery, she expanded into feature film and arts practice, setting up the production company Disobedient Films. Work she has produced has been exhibited at leading international film festivals (including Sheffield Doc/Fest, IDFA & Cork Film Festival), in galleries (the Serpentine, the Barbican Centre), cinemas (Picturehouse, Watershed, Curzon, HOME), and at the European Parliament in Brussels. In 2016, she directed and produced the critically-acclaimed THE DIVIDE, a feature length film on the psychological impact of income inequality, inspired by the book *The Spirit Level*. The film had a successful theatrical release at over 250 venues across the UK, including Picturehouse and Curzon sites, followed by a US/UK release on Netflix. www.disobedientfilms.com

JAMES McWILLIAM - COMPOSER

James McWilliam is a composer, arranger and orchestrator based in central London. His career began at Metropolis Studios in 2000, where he wrote arrangements for producer Andy Wright, including tracks for Pavarotti, Simply Red and Jeff Beck. In 2005, James began working with film composers Dario Marianelli and Patrick Doyle, for whom he orchestrated Hollywood film scores including HARRY POTTER and AS YOU LIKE IT. James has written a number of arrangements for Warner Entertainment, Universal Music and Endemol TV, and composed a number of original scores for feature films including THE PATROL (Raindance Film Festival 2013's 'Film of the Festival'). His concert work, SYMMETRY, received 9 performances by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and his STRING QUARTET NO. 1 was shortlisted by spnm. He recently released his first instrumental single, BLACK WATER, through Grandpa Stan records. James has an MA in Composition from Goldsmiths College and a BA from Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts. www.jamesmcwilliam.com

RAHIM MOLEDINA - WRITER

Rahim Moledina is an award winning filmmaker and writer. He completed his Masters in Screenwriting at the London College of Communication in 2012, in which he achieved a Distinction grade. In the same year, his short script HARD SHOULDER won second prize in the Gimme Credit International Screenplay Competition. His feature film script IQBAL'S SHOES was selected from more than 3000 scripts to be part of the BBC Writersroom Scriptroom 2013. In 2014, he wrote and directed a short film to accompany Ben Watt's solo music single HENDRA, described by filmmaker Mark Cousins as a "mini-masterpiece." In June 2014, he was one of 30 participants selected for the Edinburgh International Film Festival's Talent Lab. <http://101projects.wixsite.com/films>

DIANA OLIFIROVA - CINEMATOGRAPHER

Cinematographer Diana completed an MA course at the National Film and Television School in the UK in 2015. As a Ukrainian professional and a member of the Ukrainian Society of Cinematography, she brings a unique viewpoint to her work in the UK and all over the world. Since graduating, Diana has made music videos, commercials and shorts for top clients including Virgin Trains, Elle, Selfridges and John Newman. Her short film AFTER THE END went on to be shown at more than 100 festivals globally and won an entire mantle piece's worth of awards including Palm Springs, Dinard, KuanDu and animation Dingle. It was also selected for Vimeo Staff Picks, Short of the Week and has currently 105 thousand views. EMMA, CHANGE THE LOCKS, a short directed by Julia Hart, starring Olivia Williams and shot by Diana, has been very well received in festivals around the world, including Raindance, BFI Future Film Festival, Encounters and more. Fascinated by light, people, art, movement and life, Diana tells stories using composition, lighting and colour, each image evokes emotion and connects the audience to the story. www.dianaolifirova.com

KEIFER TAYLOR - CINEMATOGRAPHER

Keifer Nyron Taylor is a London-based filmmaker, editor and writer from Birmingham. Interested in the varying degrees of power and conformity, and the impact visual storytelling has on our everyday understanding, these ideas also feed into his critical writings. He has written extensively for film programming collective A Nos Amours' blog, and assisted on their two-year long Chantal Akerman retrospective and their 2014 UK tour of Béla Tarr's SÁTÁNTANGÓ.

JACKIE TBOUL - CINEMATOGRAPHER

Jackie Teboul is a London-based cinematographer, and a native of the South of France. While completing an MA in management she worked in Argentina and China. She then moved to London to complete an MA at the London Film School, specialising in cinematography. Since then she has shot numerous short films and documentaries that have been screened in festivals around the world, and have earned her two nominations for cinematography. www.jackieteboul.com

SIMON THORPE - CINEMATOGRAPHER

Simon has been working as London-based DOP and editor for over 10 years. His work in documentary garnered an award at the New York Film Festival and includes following a world record breaking skateboard journey across Australia, life on the road in the USA with WWE Superstars and shadowing students as they attempt to programme robots to ski in the Italian Alps. After honing his editing craft on three series of MTV's weekly film review show, Simon is now a sought-after promo and trailer editor and regularly contributes short-form content to a host of independent production companies. His work has been credited on the BBC, Sky, Channel 4, Channel 5 and MTV, and the weekly WWE radio show he edits for TalkSport can regularly be found in the Top 10 of most downloaded sports podcasts in the world. Simon's work on LONDON SYMPHONY is his first collaboration with director Alex Barrett, having followed Barrett's career for almost 15 years. They share a drummer in their respective rock bands. www.starstruckmedia.com, [@SimonThorpey](https://twitter.com/SimonThorpe)

FEATURED LOCATIONS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

- St Andrew's Parish Church, Totteridge
- Stroma Ltd
- Hand & Eye Letterpress
- Crusader Travel Giant Chess
- Harrow in LEAF Annual Show, Headstone Manor Museum
- Merton Abbey Mills
- Brixton Village Market
- Barnes Farmers Market
- Riverside Walk, Kingston
- Le Gothique Bar, Restaurant and Garden
- Bibendum Restaurant
- Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha
- Westminster Cathedral
- Kagyu Samye Dzong London
- Shaolin Temple UK
- Shree Mahavirswami Jain Temple
- Shree Swaminarayan Temple Willesden
- London Cathedral of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God and Holy Royal Martyrs
- Liberal Jewish Synagogue
- West London Synagogue
- Belsize Square Synagogue
- Baitul Futuh Mosque
- Christ the Saviour Parish Church
- Paternoster Square
- CROWDSHED
- Zealous Office
- Centre Court Shopping Centre
- Leighton House Museum
- The Imperial War Museum
- The British Museum
- SOAS University of London
- The Barbican Centre
- The Crosse Keys
- SHEDTALKS
- The Cinema Museum
- Club De Fromage at the O2 Academy Islington

CREDITS

Crew

Directed & Edited by Alex Barrett
Produced by Katharine Round
Written by Rahim Moledina
Music by James McWilliam
Photographed by Alex Barrett
Diana Olifirova
Keifer Taylor
Jackie Teboul
Simon Thorpe

Additional Photography Chris Carr
Alex Cassun
Tom Chick
Olan Collardy
Peter Harmer
Elliott Hickey
Ian Mantagni
Philipp Morozov
Nathalie Pitters
Nick Reed
Nic Wassell

Featured Londoners (in order of appearance)

Man on Tube	ADAM HICKEY	Martial Way Directors	ESMOND FRANCIS
Lady on Tube	PAMELA HUTCHINSON		RONNIE GREEN
Printing Press owner	PHIL ABEL	Shaolin Temple UK Tutors	ADAM BEALE
Woman in Phonebox	GRACE PARRY		SOO COLE
Man on Mobile	NIALL PHILLIPS		AKIN SIKU
Recurring Londoner	SIOBHAN CALLUS		MARKUS TAMDEV
Chess Player	NATALIE THOMAS	Shree Swaminarayan Temple	VAISI MIRSI GORASIA
Rower	ZENA HOWARD		SHIVJI PREMJI HIRANI
Mother	ABIGAIL ROSSER	Christ the Saviour	FATHER ANDREW DAVIS
Baby	MARTHA McWILLIAM		FATHER SIMON CUFF
Man on Bench	TIM ROBEY		KEITH FLORENCE
Musicians	KEIRON MARSHALL	Crowdshed Office Workers	OLIVER TAHERI
	HANNAH WHITE		HENRY FREEMAN
Baby Eating Ice Cream	ANINA BARRETT		LAURENCE LORD
Man in Bar	JASON CRIMP	Leighton House Visitor	SEBASTIAN WRAY
Woman in Bar	MICHELLE FACEY	Students	ANNA EDWARDS
Man in Restaurant	MATTHEW JURE		ALI ZAHOR
Foodbank Volunteer	MATT WOODS	Pool Players	ABDIRAHMAN HUSSAIN
Langar Eater	GÜNALP KOÇAK		WALEED MIR
Martial Way Students	AMAN ABDI		AHMED YUSUF
	GUERIYA ABDI	Pianist	ATHANASIA KOKKINOGENI
	SAMIRA ABDULAH	Women in Bar	JULIE DILLON
	FARAH ADEN		KIM TOLLEY
	MOHAMMED AGHA	Crowdshed Event Guests	JULIAN COSTLEY
	MUHUDIN ALI		CHRIS WESTBROOK
	WALED ALI	Crowdshed Event Speaker	PAUL CARTER ROBINSON
	HOTHAYFA AYDARUS	Cinema Museum Cashier	LOUISE MCCONNELL
	MAHESH GOLAP		
	LAVA KAKAKHAN		
	AYUB MOHAMED		
	LORAN SULAIMAN		
	RYAN WANGA		