

ARTS BROOKFIELD PRESENTS

# SILENT FILMS / LIVE MUSIC

Curated by WNYC's John Schaefer

7:30pm

Winter Garden at Brookfield Place

## Wednesday, January 22

Scored and performed by Alexis Cuadrado

Alice Guy-Blaché's *The Consequences of Feminism* and  
*Algie the Miner*

Harold M. Shaw's *The Land Beyond the Sunset*

Charlie Chaplin's *The Immigrant*

## Thursday, January 23

Scored and performed by Vernon Reid

James Searle Dawley's *Frankenstein*

Tod Browning's *The Unknown*

## Friday, January 24

Scored and performed by GoGo Penguin

Godfrey Reggio's *Koyaanisqatsi*

## A NOTE FROM JOHN SCHAEFER

We began presenting silent films with live music in the Winter Garden atrium just over twenty years ago. It seemed clear to me, at the beginning, that offering a work of art that was complete, and completely silent, to a contemporary musician was a rare opportunity. Creative artists often say there's nothing they dread more than the blank page; well, with these films, you get a page full of storytelling – but one that is practically begging for a second story, a sonic one, to be told along with it. That's the sort of thing that can really inspire a musician, and we've had some live soundtracks that have veered into wonderfully unexpected directions.

But a second reason has emerged over the years for continuing this process: these films, some of them over a century old, are still relevant today. This of course is the property of art, to transcend the time in which it was made. But it's also a measure of how the themes in these movies keep recurring through the years. Take this year's program, for example. Alexis Cuadrado has chosen films that deal with immigration (Chaplin's *The Immigrant*), income inequality (*The Land Beyond the Sunset*), and gender roles (in two very short films by Alice Guy-Blaché, the first female director). Vernon Reid became fascinated by the theme of "the other" – a theme that has long manifested itself in horror stories. He's chosen the 1910 version of *Frankenstein* and the remarkable Tod Browning masterpiece *The Unknown*. (That latter stars the famous Lon Chaney and a young, unknown Joan Crawford.)

Finally, the UK trio GoGo Penguin has re-scored a contemporary silent film classic, Godfrey Reggio's *Koyaanisqatsi*. Originally created with composer Philip Glass (whose score is one of his best-known works), *Koyaanisqatsi* deals with mankind's questionable stewardship of the earth, and the choices we've made with regard to technology. ("Koyaanisqatsi" is a Hopi word that means "life out of balance.") In taking a silent film that already had a soundtrack and creating something entirely new for it, GoGo Penguin has actually stepped right into the tradition of old silent films, where each screening was a chance for a live musician or band to try something new. And of course, the film itself is part of a long lineage of movies that are driven not just by the technology available to the director, but by the power of his—or her—ideas.

- John Schaefer

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## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22

Scored and performed by Alexis Cuadrado

Alice Guy-Blaché's *The Consequences of Feminism*  
(6:44 mins) and *Algie the Miner* (9:42 mins)  
(World Premieres)

Harold M. Shaw's *The Land Beyond the Sunset*  
(14 mins) (World Premiere)

Charlie Chaplin's *The Immigrant* (25 mins)

## Alexis Cuadrado Group

Chloe Rowlands, Trumpet and Flugelhorn

Emily Sgouros, Vibraphone

Marcus Strickland, Tenor Sax and Bass Clarinet

Martha Kato, Piano

Miles Okazaki, Guitar

Rodrigo Recabarren, Drums

Roman Filiu, Alto and Soprano Sax, Flute, and Clarinet

Ryan Keberle, Trombone

Sara Caswell, Violin

Alexis Cuadrado, Bass and Compositions

## About Alexis Cuadrado

Barcelona-born and Brooklyn-based Alexis Cuadrado is an award-winning composer, producer, bandleader, bassist and educator. He has become one of the most sought-after musicians in the New York scene. *NPR Music* says: "Listen to Cuadrado's compositions and you'll find every reason to take him seriously." *New York Magazine* remarks: "His intricate and sharply defined compositions show that he's tapped into something much deeper."

Cuadrado's work draws from the crossover of jazz, world, flamenco, and new music, exploring the confluence of the Hispanic and American cultures, as well as embracing a deep commitment to comment on social issues. His recent output is a restless exploration of cross-disciplinary works that embrace poetry, film, radio-podcasts, dance and design. For more information, visit [alexiscuadrado.com](http://alexiscuadrado.com).

## THURSDAY, JANUARY 23

Scored and performed by Vernon Reid

James Searle Dawley's *Frankenstein* (14 mins)  
(World Premiere)

Tod Browning's *The Unknown* (59 mins)  
(World Premiere)

The live scores for *Frankenstein* and *The Unknown* will be a combination of pre-composed and improvised acoustic and electronic music examining the question - who is the other?

The ensemble is comprised of some of New York's finest and most exciting multi-genre instrumentalists:

Vernon Reid, MC, Guitars, and Electronics

Howard Alper, Drums and Electronic Percussion

V. Jeffrey Smith, Saxophone and Woodwinds

Mazz Swift, Acoustic and Electric Violin and Vocals

Leon Gruenbaum, Keyboards, Medodica, Clarinet and

Samchillian Tip Tip Tip Cheeepeeeee

### About Vernon Reid

London-born lead guitarist, founder of Living Colour and a co-founder of the Black Rock Coalition, Vernon Reid has done a great deal to undermine stereotypical expectations of what kinds of music black artists ought to play. His rampant eclecticism encompasses everything from hard rock and punk to funk, R&B and avant-garde jazz, and his anarchic, lightning-fast solos have become a hallmark. In 1980, he joined Ronald Shannon Jackson's

Decoding Society, and over the course of the decade, Reid went on to work with a wide variety of experimental musicians including Defunkt, Bill Frisell, John Zorn, Arto Lindsay, and Public Enemy. He has continued with extended collaborations as a producer and performer with James “Blood” Ulmer’s Memphis Blood, with DJ Logic in Yohimbe Brothers, the collaborative Burnt Sugar Arkestra, and the Tony Williams Tribute band “Spectrum Road” with Jack Bruce, John Medeski and Cindy Blackman-Santana. His latest project “The Zig Zag Power Trio” features Will Calhoun and Melvin Gibbs. Reid has also scored projects for celebrated filmmakers such as Derek Wan, Shula Chen, Thomas Allan Harris, Brad Lichtenstein, and Shola Lynch.

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## **FRIDAY, JANUARY 24**

**Scored and performed by GoGo Penguin**

Godfrey Reggio’s *Koyaanisqatsi* (100 mins)

### **About GoGo Penguin**

Manchester-based leftfield piano trio GoGo Penguin are Chris Illingworth, piano; Nick Blacka, bass; and Rob Turner, drums. Their music has been described as acoustic-electronica, but they draw equally on rock, jazz and minimalism, computer game soundtracks and glitchy-electronica to create their unique music. Their 2014 album *v2.0* (Gondwana Records) was named a Mercury Prize album of the year alongside albums from Damon Albarn, Young Fathers, and Jungle. In 2015, they signed to Blue Note Records and released the albums *Man Made Object* in 2016 and *A Humdrum Star* in 2018. Their EP, *Ocean in a Drop* (Music

for Film) was released in October 2019 and they are currently recording a new album for release in 2020. For further information, visit [gogopenguin.co.uk](http://gogopenguin.co.uk).

## About the Score

Originally scored by Philip Glass, *Koyaanisqatsi* is a remarkable cinematic masterpiece and one of the band's favorite films because of its powerful fusion of music and image. In 2015, GoGo Penguin wrote and performed their new score for the film as part of the opening season of HOME – a new center for international contemporary art, theatre, and film in Manchester, UK.

GoGo Penguin's richly emotional music offers a perfect contemporary dialogue with Reggio's profound images. Moving from fragile beauty to powerful frenzy their rich new score reflects the original themes of the film and in performance offers an overwhelming audio-visual experience that will appeal to fans of GoGo Penguin and cult cinema in equal measure.

*This production was originally commissioned by HOME in Manchester as part of the Music and Film Project, supported by Film Hub North West Central, part of the BFI Film Audience Network, and the PRS for Music Foundation.*

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## ABOUT BROOKFIELD PLACE

Brookfield Place (BFPL) New York is one of is one of Brookfield's most iconic Place Making destinations that brings together modern office space, cultural experiences, curated dining and world-class shopping. The 14-acre commercial complex on the Hudson River in Lower Manhattan is animated year-round so visitors can enjoy ever-changing experiences, from art installations and live music to dining, shopping and more.

## **ABOUT ARTS BROOKFIELD**

Arts Brookfield presents exciting, world-class cultural experiences to hundreds of thousands of people for free each year in both indoor and outdoor public spaces at Brookfield's premier office properties in New York, Los Angeles, Denver, Houston, Washington, D.C., London, Toronto, Perth, and Sydney. From concerts, theater and dance to film screenings and art exhibitions, Arts Brookfield brings public spaces to life through art. Visit [ArtsBrookfield.com](https://ArtsBrookfield.com) for a complete schedule of events.

## **ARTS BROOKFIELD STAFF**

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