

Kenya's Symphony

An Animated Short

Directed & produced by Carlos Douglas Jr.

ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT



Total Run Time: 00:04:50

Festival Screenings:

Chicago Southland International Film Festival, New York International Children's Film Festival, Redwood Shorts and Scripts, Big Teeth Small Shorts Film Festival, Lift-Off Sessions, Reel Cinema Fest, ANIMAFILM International Animation Festival, Art All Night- Trenton: 8th Annual Film Festival, Aryan International Children's Film Festival, FLICKFAIR, Melrose Film Festival, New York Animation Film Awards, Tokyo International Short Film Festival, among others.

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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Kenya's Symphony was completed with no budget, only with the resources at my disposal, along with my collaborators. *Kenya's Symphony* tells the story of a person being placed in an unfamiliar situation and being changed by the experience; this change happens not by force, but by chance. By giving the symphony a chance, she finds enchantment in the unfamiliar.

Despite everything and everyone looking different, Kenya becomes one of the insiders in a whimsical turn of events. I hope that this film can be viewed by people both young and old so that they can have some fun watching Kenya's chaotic energy be transformed into something positive. I also hope that they take away this valuable piece of wisdom with them. Give things a try and experience a whole new side of yourself!

-Carlos Douglas, 2020

SUMMARY

A bold young girl reluctantly visits the symphony for the first time with her mother, wreaking havoc with a straw and spitballs to entertain herself! But through the power of orchestra, she discovers a musical passion hidden within herself.

SYNOPSIS

Kenya, A bold five-year old girl, reluctantly ends up in her first symphony concert with her mother. As the conductor lays a downbeat and the orchestra begins to play, Kenya's patience wears thin. To entertain herself, the bold young girl pulls out a straw and begins to reign havoc in the auditorium with spitballs. Against her mother's pleading, Kenya continues to behave in disobedience.

Kenya ultimately wins the higher ground and takes one final shot with her straw in hand; suddenly, a sour music note is played in place of a spitball. To Kenya's surprise, her straw has become a musical instrument, imitating the oboe soloist's performance on stage. She cautiously gives the straw another try, and more music notes emanate out the other end! Enchanted by the sounds of music, Kenya's imagination soars with the whimsical melody in a colorful epiphany. After the piece's conclusion, Kenya is triumphantly escorted out of the symphony hall as the newest (and youngest) patron of the orchestra.

***Kenya's Symphony* is a touching story about the power of a young mind being stimulated in the most unlikely of places. It highlights the theme of coming to appreciate an important art form less traveled by a modern generation. The art direction of the film creates a visible contrast between its main characters and the majority. Ultimately, this film pushes the theme even further by encouraging individuals of different demographics to coexist and enjoy the artform of orchestral music.**

ABOUT THE FILM

For many creatives, their works are inspired by true events and experiences that later lend themselves to artistic expression. In the case of *Kenya's Symphony*, Filmmaker Carlos Douglas Jr decided

to produce an animated short that was loosely based off of a night he experienced working a performance at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

During the 2017-2018 Season, Carlos worked as an usher for the Chicago Symphony. One of his favorite spots to work in was the main floor, where he would oftentimes have the opportunity to stand inside the auditorium and watch the performances from the entrance doors. With the Symphony mostly being attended by older patrons during regular series performances, the last thing Carlos expected to see was a child in the auditorium one night in particular.

The young child sat in the back of the auditorium with her mother, which happened to be directly in front of Carlos' post. It was immediately obvious that the girl did not want to be a part of this formal occasion for long. On routine, the lights went down, the conductor walked on stage and the crowd became entranced and attentive; the auditorium goes silent. Immediately following the first measure of music, the young girl's attention flew south. She got out of her seat and marched around the small aisle, she made noises and faces at her mother, and she bothered the patrons all around her section. As Carlos stood there observing the interaction between a mother and her misbehaving daughter, he began to see potential in this rare moment.

When it came time to write the treatment for a new animated short, Carlos took inspiration from that one night at the Symphony and built a narrative around a young girl coming to appreciate the orchestra. The short would take place primarily in an auditorium, similar to that of the Chicago Symphony Hall. Carlos decided to name the young girl in his film, "Kenya" and told his story from the perspective of an African-American family. This film would unfold from a unique perspective that would acknowledge that race, age, and gender have no boundaries when it comes to appreciating particular art form.

The film was produced with no budget or funding; all of the work was done by incredibly talented artists and with the resources at the disposal of both Carlos and his team. The film is animated in 2-D traditional fashion. Both Kenya and her mother are designed and animated in a more contemporary manner, while the setting and the background characters are animated in a style reminiscent of the United Productions of America (UPA) library of films. This style was assumed so that the theme of the film itself could be more effectively expressed. Kenya remains in her contemporary style until she has an epiphany during the climax of the film. When her design changes, she is no longer the insider; she sees herself as an equal to the surrounding environment, no longer ostracized by ignorance or boredom. Kenya is a fundamentally changed character by the end of this film, going through the full "hero's journey".

The score was written by composer Michael Van Bodegom-Smith, and "performed" by a 60-piece orchestra comprised of international world-class musicians in Chicago. In order to gain a studio-quality sound with musicians, each player was recorded separately during multiple sessions. The music was all recorded in a single, garden-level room in Michael's apartment and later mixed by Liam Rice in L.A. The score is quintessential to the success of the film, being that no dialogue is spoken throughout its entirety. This rousing composition expresses the entire gamut of emotions that characters feel in this animated world, with Kenya at its base.

Kenya's Symphony premiered at the Big Teeth Small Shorts Festival in Chicago at Empirical Brewery in January 2020. The film won the "People's Choice Award" for Small Shorts and was met with critical acclaim. The film was later awarded for "Best Score" and "Best in Show-1st Runner Up" at the Reel Cinema Film Fest. Traveling to the United Kingdom, the film was accepted into the 2020 Lift-Off Sessions and was streamed online for the festival's run. The film has screened worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic, appearing in over 120 film festivals thus far, including the New York International Children's Film Festival, FLICKFAIR, The Chicago Southland International Children's Film Festival, and more.

THE FILMMAKERS

CARLOS DOUGLAS JR, Director & Producer

Carlos Douglas Jr is an animator whose art has taken many forms, ranging from animated and live-action short films, to digital advertising and merchandise. He has created assets for brands such as Allied Artists & Big Teeth Productions, storyboarded for live-action shorts, as well as designed merchandise for the non-profit organization, Live Free 999. In the digital marketing space, Carlos was the Lead Creative Designer for Impressions Face + Body, a medical aesthetics practice in the heart of Chicago where he found success in using videography and animation to encourage lead generation.

In his career, Carlos has carved out a trajectory towards animation production work. In 2023, Carlos was selected as a mentee for the Netflix Foundations Program with a focus in feature production management. His most notable work is the award-winning animated short, *Kenya's Symphony*, which has been featured at festivals and venues worldwide. Following the success of *Kenya's Symphony*, he funded and executive produced a children's music album (of the same name) with composer Michael Van Bodegom-Smith and musicians from the US and North Macedonia. The album was selected the *For Your Consideration* shortlist at the 66th Annual GRAMMY® Awards. Currently, he is illustrating his first children's book, taking his art into the next medium.

MICHAEL VAN BODEGOM-SMITH, Composer

Michael Van Bodegom Smith is a Los Angeles-based composer, producer, and brass instrumentalist whose work spans animated children's programming and independent film and theatre, to summer blockbusters and superhero TV shows.

Hailing from Chicago, Michael quickly earned credits on critically acclaimed movies and TV series such as *The Invitation*, *Strays*, and Marvel's *Ironheart*. He has since contributed to works such as National Geographic's *Katrina*, Netflix's *Princess Power*, *Adventure Time: Fionna & Cake*, *Pokémon: Path to the Peak*, and *Star Wars Outlaws*. In the theatre world, Michael has music-directed four musicals and scored seven plays across LA and Chicago. Notably, his award-winning Hollywood Fringe Festival musical was adapted into a feature film and is currently being workshopped in small independent theaters nationwide. Beyond visual media, Michael is an active songwriter and multi-instrumentalist in the LA scene, writing everything from orchestral pieces for the concert hall to Pop-Funk/R&B fusion. As a session musician, his credits include *The Ghost of Molly McGee*, *Lego Star Wars*, and *Zombies: The Reanimated Series*.

Michael is a voting member of the Television and Recording Academies and is affiliated with the Society of Composers and Lyricists, Composers Diversity Collective, and The Alliance for Women Film Composers. Based in Mid-City with his partner and colorful fish, Michael is a dedicated practitioner of MMA, an avid hiker, and loves being out with good company

LIAM RICE, Score Mixer

Liam Rice is an English composer, producer and engineer based in Los Angeles who creates unique, original blends of orchestral and electronic music.

Since moving to LA at the beginning of 2019, Liam has contributed to a variety of projects lead by notable composers such as H. Scott Salinas (*The Banker*, *Into America's Wild*, *Sea of Shadows*), Jeff Morrow (*Mucho Mucho Amor*) and Kubilay Uner (*Force of Nature*). As a composer he has worked on several short films including *Jeong* and *Prom Night*.

Liam grew up in England, learning to play piano and guitar as a child. He went on to experience and engage with a wide range of styles and genres from traditional music of the British Isles to rock and

metal. He interned at local recording studios and developed an interest in audio production and recording. Liam went on to study music production and composition for film at Leeds College of Music, before moving to the US in 2017 to study a Masters in music composition for the screen at Columbia College Chicago.

As of August 2019, Liam has been based at Hans Zimmer's Remote Control Productions in Santa Monica, where he works with composer Matthew Margeson (*Rocketman*, *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*, *Kingsman: The Golden Circle*) as an assistant. With Matthew, Liam is contributing to the upcoming release of *The King's Man*, and *A Babysitter's Guide to Monster Hunting*.

EMILEE Q BRACKENBURY, Sound Designer

Emilee Q Brackenbury is a sound designer who currently resides in Chicago. Emilee operates Avid Pro Tools. She has experience with foley both as an artist and engineer, voice over, and ADR. Her past experiences have given her the skills to efficiently sound design, edit, and mix. Other areas that Emilee specializes in are photography and experimental animation.

When Emilee is not focusing on sound design, photography, or animation, she enjoys traveling and documenting her adventures, as well as exploring different kinds of music. Each experience she has turns into inspiration for her work.

SELECT AWARDS/NOMINATIONS

Big Teeth Small Shorts Film Festival
Chicago, IL
January 30, 2020
"People's Choice ~ Small Short"

Reel Cinema Fest
Elburn, Illinois
April 26, 2020
"Best Score" & "Best Film - 1st Runner Up"

New York Animation Film Awards
New York, NY
June 12, 2020
Finalist

RED MOVIE AWARDS
Reims, France
May 21, 2022
Best Animation, Best Original Score

FLICKFAIR
Las Angeles, CA
June 1, 2020
Finalist

Redwood Shorts and Scripts
Sunnyvale, CA
August 23, 2020
Best Animated Short
Chicago Indie Film Awards
Chicago, IL
November 1, 2020
Semi-Finalist

Tokyo International Short Film Festival
Tokyo, Japan
December 2, 2020
Honorable Mention

1st Monthly Film Festival
Belgrade, Serbia
September 3, 2021
Best Animated Short

Monthly Future of Film Awards
June 2, 2022
Best Student Film, Honorable Mention:
Best First Time Director (Short)

Reale Film Festival - Monthly Awards
Milano, Italy
November 30, 2020
Honorable Mention

Cotswold International Film Festival
April 10, 2021
Best Animated Short

Andromeda Film Festival
February 10, 2021
Best Animated Short

Canadian Cinematography Awards
August 7, 2021
Best Animated Film

New York Cinematography Awards
August 2, 2021
Best Animation Film

Beaufort Film Festival
Beaufort, NC
October 21, 2021
Nominee: "Coastiest"

Fullshot Cine Mag Fest
April 1, 2021
Best Animation

Thessaloniki Free Short Festival
Thessaloniki, Greece
May 9, 2021
Best Animated Film
Best Music

Karukrit International Film Festival
June 19, 2021
Best Animation Short

Green Mountain International Film Festival
Burlington, VT
Jan 8, 2022
Best Animated Short

Florida Shorts
June 30, 2021
Semi-Finalist- Short Animation

Hollywood Venus Awards
Istanbul, Turkey
August 31, 2021
Best Animated Short

Monthly Indie Shorts
Jun 1, 2021
Best Animation of the Month

Golden Wheat Awards
Istanbul, Turkey
June 30, 2021
Best Animated Short

Your Movie On TV Festival
Agropoli, Italy
Apr 4, 2021
Finalist: Animation Film

Vesuvius International Monthly Film Fest
December 30, 2020
Best Animated Short

Laurus Film Festival
February 1, 2021
Best Animated Film

Beyond The Curve International Film Festival
January 29, 2021
Best Animated Film

Athens International Monthly Art Film Festival
Best Original Score/Soundtrack

After Hour Film Festival
November 3, 2020
Best Animated Short

Venice Short Film
Venice, CA
July 7, 2020
Finalist

Chicago Southland International Film Festival
October 23, 2020
Best Animated Short Film

Kids Rule Film Festival
January 22, 2021
Best Animated Film for Children

EduFilm
December 5, 2020
Best Animation Film

Reale Film Festival-Monthly Awards
November 30, 2020
Best Animated Film

Golden Short Film Festival
January 2, 2021
Finalist: Golden Animated Short
Finalist: Golden Soundtrack

Cambio International Film Festival
February 25, 2021
Best Animation Finalist

Baku International Short Film Festival
December 10, 2020
Best Animation Finalist

Standalone Film Festival and Awards
Hollywood, CA
August 6, 2021
Nominee

18th Annual ReelHeART International Film and Screenplay Festival
Toronto, Ontario
July 5, 2021
Best Animated Film

Bucharest ShortCut CineFest
February 27, 2021
Nominee

Canada's Yes! Let's Make a Movie Film Festival
Montreal, Canada
Nov 28, 2021
Nominee

Art Film Awards- Monthly Competition
December 2, 2021
Honorable Mention

*"When the sounds of music crescendo, Menace turns
Maestro!"*

CREDITS

<u>Director and Producer</u> CARLOS DOUGLAS JR	<u>Color</u> CARLOS DOUGLAS JR	<u>Additional Recording Assistant</u> ALEX BRINKLEY
<u>Animation</u> CARLOS DOUGLAS JR	JEY WOYNER	<u>Additional Music Preparation</u> ADAM DIB
HELEN GRIMES	FRANCESCO PORCELLO	TOMÀS VIDELA
FRANCESCO PORCELLO	<u>Sound Editor</u> RYAN FELBERBAUM	<u>Orchestra Contractor</u> SARAH KIM
SEAN CARTER	ALLY GILL	<u>Musicians</u> ANN MARIE GREEN
PAUL KRITIKOS	<u>Supervising Sound Editor</u> EMILEE Q BRACKENBURY	PIOTR LATO
CASSIDY ROMERO	<u>Foley Engineer</u> ALLY GILL	TYLER KUEHN
MICHA ROGERS	<u>Foley Artist</u> JESSICA JUREWICZ	JOHN POPE
<u>Backgrounds</u> LILIAN MAYUMI	<u>Composer</u> MICHAEL VAN BODEGOM-	KARA MILLER
BERMAS	SMITH	MICHAEL VAN BODEGOM
CARLOS DOUGLAS JR	<u>Score Mixer</u> LIAM RICE	SMITH
DANIEL DINH		JAVIER CISNEROS
EMILIO MALAGON		ALAN LUNTZ
<u>Colorist</u> MELISSA BROOKS		KYLE J. DICKSON
<u>Design</u> HANNAH MEYERS		CALEB PAXTON
		SEOYOEN MIN
		ADAM MALONEY

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MIKE NICKELSON
BRUNO SURDO
ELENA LOPEZ
BRIAN VANCE
CHARLES BRAICO
COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO
AND ALL OF OUR FRIENDS &
FAMILY





Kenya's Symphony



a film by
**CARLOS
DOUGLAS JR.**

music by
MICHAEL VAN
BODEGOM SMITH

WHEN THE SOUNDS OF MUSIC CRESCENDO...
MENACE TURNS MAESTRO!

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