

Sight of Sound 2017

If you read this document, you will know everything you need to know!

About Sight of Sound

Sight of Sound is an annual event that challenges filmmakers to create short silent films that are set to and inspired by classical music, much like Disney's *Fantasia* yet inclusive of live-action films. Competitive entries are reviewed and selected by a jury of filmmakers, and the most outstanding films are screened in concert, with the Dallas Chamber Symphony performing the soundtrack live-to-film. Select filmmakers are also eligible for monetary prizes and license to use the Dallas Chamber Symphony's recorded concert audio in their films.

For inspiration, we recommend viewing [Last Year's Official Selection](#).

Reversing the Process

Traditionally, filmmakers create their films with the expectation of adding a soundtrack in post-production. They might enlist the services of a film composer to write an original score for their film, or acquire licenses to dub existing musical recordings to their film to enhance the action on screen.

Sight of Sound explores the reversal of this cinematic process. It is the first and only contest of its kind in the world, that asks filmmakers to create a visual work of art designed to serve and enhance the drama of a musical score. Sight of Sound is about finding ways to cinematize music, tell amazing stories, and breathe new life into some of classical music's greatest masterpieces.

Rules & Guidelines

- Filmmakers choose from one of the competition's [Music Selections 2017](#), and create an original silent film, in which the Music Selection is utilized as the complete and unaltered soundtrack.
- If you would like to use a piece of classical music in your film that is not on the Music Selections list, you may submit a Wild Card Request and Entry. Wild Card Entries can sometimes be complicated, so please read the [Wild Card Guidelines](#), and get prior approval before you create your film.
- Synthesized recordings (or recordings that utilize electronic, non-acoustic instruments) are not allowed. If you are unsure about your selection of music, please use the [Wild Card Request Form](#) to ask us about it before you create your film.
- Filmmakers must dub the complete and unedited "Official Placeholder Recording" into their film, as this music serves as a temporary musical placeholder, to which you synchronize the visual action on screen. If your film is selected for screening as a Finalist, the Dallas Chamber Symphony will then mute this musical placeholder, and perform the score live, in perfect synchronization with your film, at a public concert at Dallas City Performance Hall. After the screening, you will then have license to synchronize the Dallas Chamber Symphony's professional audio recording with your film, and distribute the combined sound and picture for non-commercial purposes. Semifinalists (those whose films are deemed excellent by our Jury, but not screened in concert) still receive the DCS' synchronization license, provided that there is a Finalist for which their identical music selection is performed and recorded. Commercial distribution licenses may be negotiated if necessary.
- Music Selections cannot be distorted, modified or altered in any way, as these changes would make it impossible for the Dallas Chamber Symphony to replicate the soundtrack in your film. The orchestra will only perform the composer's original score and sheet music as published, without any alterations.
- Aside from your Music Selection, your film must be silent. Dialogue and sound effects are not allowed. Extensive use of subtitles is also prohibited.

- All of the selected Finalist films will be presented by a Christie L2K1000 digital projector, onto a 13.5- by 24-foot Da-Lite Dual Vision screen, suspended over the stage, above the orchestra.
- Films must be appropriate for concert audiences of all ages. Please only submit films that would be suitable for screening to a ten-year-old.
- While not required, we strongly encourage Finalist Filmmakers to attend the Sight of Sound film screening with the Dallas Chamber Symphony. Attendance will not influence contest results in any way. Please consult the Dallas Chamber Symphony website for performance details and ticket information. Filmmakers who confirm attendance may have opportunities to introduce and discuss their film, as well as accept in-person the competition's Best Picture and/or Audience Choice Award. Finalists invited to participate in the concert screening are provided up to four (4) complimentary event passes.
- Filmmakers need not include a visible timecode in their films. The orchestra will produce its own timecode and synchronization protocol which will be utilized by the conductor.

Submission & Review

- Filmmakers must [submit a film](#) through FilmFreeway, provide all required supportive materials, and pay the \$30 non-refundable application fee (\$15 for students), by the [applicable competition deadline](#).
- Submission fees directly compensate our jury members for their time, and all submissions will be viewed by at least three filmmakers with experience across all genres.
- The Jury will convene for a preliminary review, at which time Semifinalists, whose films will advance to a second evaluation, will be determined.
- Finalists, whose films will be screened in concert, will be determined during the second evaluation, which will be conducted in consultation with Richard McKay, the Dallas Chamber Symphony's Artistic Director. During this second evaluation, each film's unique instrumentation and musical performance parameters, as well as other programmatic and logistical concerns, will be taken into consideration. The Jury will work to curate a natural flow of contrasting films and musical styles, that our audience will enjoy, all while presenting each film in parity, and in the best possible light. At this stage, we will also begin production of the concert event, while making arrangements to have all of the appropriate shifts of musical personnel and soloists, as applicable, so as to make for a seamless live concert presentation. A final program and concert performance order will be decided and certified.
- If your film is not selected and screened as a Finalist, you are eligible to resubmit it to future Sight of Sound competitions as a Wild Card Entry.
- Filmmakers are welcome to submit multiple entries, but only one film per Music Selection.

Best Practices

- Filmmakers are urged to consider that some of the competition music selections are naturally more accessible and popular than others. For this reason, films that explore the more challenging music selections may end up being more successful. Please take time to listen to all of the selections to find the ones that most inspire you.
- Filmmakers are urged to avoid editing their silent films so that the picture starts before or after the music. While there are exceptions to this rule, in general, the most successful submissions are those for which the sound and picture start and end more or less at the same time.
- Filmmakers are encouraged to avoid lengthy textual, on-screen credits in their films. In a concert screening environment, the most successful submissions are those that limit credits to the very end, after the music ends, and overlaid onto a black background. Please consider that credits that appear while the music is still playing will prompt the live audience to applaud, and thus ruin the recorded concert audio for yourself and Semifinalist filmmakers who may also wish to use it. Therefore, it is best to limit credits to the very end, after the sound and picture have ended. We suggest the following format: 5-second Title Card Intro over black background, your

film, 5-seconds of End Credits over black background. We understand film credits are important, and can provide additional printed credits in our concert program booklets as needed.

- In general, the most successful filmmakers are those who have a sensitive ear, and who have taken time to consider the drama of the musical score and what it evokes visually. If the music in your film serves as mere background music, you might consider what you could do to generate a more dynamic interplay between sound and picture. If your film could be equally well supported by another piece of music with a similar mood, chances are that your film is not all that well adapted to your specific music selection. Sight of Sound is about creating a film as unique as its sound, in contrast to the convention of creating a film and then adding sound to it.
- The most successful filmmakers are also those who take time to consider their unique audience and venue at Sight of Sound. While the Dallas Chamber Symphony's audience is likely to include film enthusiasts who will love even your bravest, experimental creations, please be advised that the most successful films tend to be those with broad-based appeal, and an ability to speak to a diverse demographic spectrum.

Assurances

- With the submission of a film, you certify that you are its creator and legal owner, and have secured all necessary rights for the picture.
- With the submission of a film, you certify that its exhibition, provided the free use of the Dallas Chamber Symphony's live performance and recorded sound, will not violate or infringe upon any rights including but not limited to images and content.
- With the submission of a film, you grant the Dallas Chamber Symphony and its Sight of Sound Film Competition the right to use the film at its public concert(s), and online for promotional, archival, and other non-commercial purposes.
- By submitting a film, you grant the Dallas Chamber Symphony and its Sight of Sound Film Competition, the right to copy any submitted material, and utilize your image for promotional, non-commercial purposes.
- With the submission of a film, you grant the Dallas Chamber Symphony the right to synchronize its live performance and/or recorded concert audio with your film.

Common, Yet Avoidable, Pitfalls

- **Wild Card Entries that are too long.** Long music selections are more challenging for the orchestra to accommodate than short ones. Music Selections that are 3-7 minutes in duration are ideal. Anything beyond 10 minutes starts to get tricky. Furthermore, in the case of a 15-minute selection, our Jury would need to deem it so compelling, that it deserves a screening instead of, alternatively, a few good 5-minute selections. The orchestra has a limited time on stage, and thus the concert format favors (as will our Jury), a collective of diverse, short films, which make for the most enjoyable concert screening experience.
- **Clichés.** There are certain themes that our Jury sees a lot, so please be advised that if you should choose one of the following, your film may face stiffer competition, and perhaps also lose points for creativity. Because they are ubiquitous, films with the following attributes generally need to be particularly strong, so as to stand out from the pack.
 - **Painters.** Films whose primary focus is on a painter, or other visual artist, who creates visual art as music plays in the background.
 - **Dancers.** Films of a dancer (ballet, modern, etc.), who dances as music plays in the background.
 - **Infidelity.** Films with a narrative plot that centers on a person's discovery of an unfaithful partner, and that person's subsequent depression, and/or quest for revenge.
 - **Screen-savers.** Videos that are merely computerized visualizations or slideshows will not be considered.
 - **Overly dark, angst-ridden films.** We receive many very sad, dreary films. If you gravitate toward darker subjects, that's just fine! Sophisticated filmmakers who convey a clear and meaningful message with specificity and purpose will always stand out and be noticed, especially by our Jury. For what it's worth

though, consider that it is always the uplifting, fun films that receive the most votes for our Audience Choice Award.

- **Pastoral Images.** Films which merely set bucolic images of nature to music.
- **Not Using the “Official Placeholder Recording”.** If you have chosen to create your film to one of the pre-sanctioned Music Selections, it is imperative that you purchase and use in your film, the exact recording that we designate on iTunes. There are usually multiple versions of each piece of classical music that have the same title and composer, but that nonetheless utilize different instrumentations and thusly have different performance durations. Due to restrictions of instrumentation and sheet-music availability, the Jury can only consider films whose soundtrack is identical to the pre-approved Placeholder Recording. Furthermore, when all filmmakers work from the same Placeholder Recording and timecode, everybody’s film (including Semifinalists) can then be synched to the Dallas Chamber Symphony’s live concert audio in exactly the same way.
- **Challenging music-to-film synchronizations.** It is far easier for you to edit your picture to a pre-recorded soundtrack than it is for us to synchronize a live orchestra’s performance to your film. While the orchestra will perform the exact soundtrack to which you make your film—no two performances of the piece are precisely the same. Films that require the musicians to play specific notes at specific visual moments are a challenge because a difference of even one or two seconds can make the film and music appear out of sync. Therefore, avoid edits that require split-second synchronization between sound a picture, i.e. numerous or rapid picture edits which must correspond to short, individual musical notes in the score. For example, see the opening of [Blue Disquietude](#). In this excellent film entry, one can see how the notes align with flashes of light. If the orchestra were off even by a half a second, this film would not work. This kind of synchronization, while possible, is risky and very tricky in live performance. The films with the most successful live screenings are those with a strong interplay between the sound a picture, but which work even if there should be very small temporal deviations in live performance. The orchestra can perform your soundtrack to film very accurately, but please give us a second or two of wiggle room in either direction, whenever possible.

What are Wild Card Entries

Wild Card Entries are music selections that are made by the filmmaker, and thus not listed amongst the competition’s pre-sanctioned repertoire. These entries are allowed because we realize that you may already have a classical piece of music in mind that you would like to use in your film.

The Sight of Sound competition focuses on classical musical repertory that can be performed by a traditional chamber or symphony orchestra, however, Wild Card music selections may also include works written for chamber ensemble, including trios, quartets, quintets, and the like. Synthesized recordings (or recordings that utilize electronic, non-acoustic instruments) are not allowed. We often welcome music selections by living composers, and films made in collaboration with them.

For a variety of reasons, Wild Card Entries can be complicated, so please review the guidelines on this page, and submit a Wild Card Request to have your music pre-approved before you create and submit your film. We strive to respond to all Wild Card Requests within one business day.

Why do Wild Card Entries need to be pre-approved?

Before your music can be accepted, we need to verify that:

- sheet music and a performance license can be purchased or rented for the performance of your score
- the placeholder recording you will use is acceptable, and within mainstream performance practice
- your choice of music is a good fit when performed instead of, or in addition to, the pre-sanctioned Music Selections

Submit a [Wild Card Request](#), and we will do the homework for you. We will research your program, consider its requirements, and give you a quick “yea” or “nay” as to whether your independent choice of music can be accommodated.

One More Thing About Wild Card Entries...

Unlike films that are submitted to our pre-selected music, the fact that you are selecting your own music ensures, in all likelihood, that your film will be the only one that we received for your particular music selection. While your film may advance to Semifinals based on merit, please understand that the orchestra is not otherwise planning to perform your particular music selection. The orchestra will only perform your music selection if your film advances to screening as a Finalist. Therefore, we will only be able to provide an audio recording which you may synchronize to your film if you are selected as a Finalist.

Wild Card Entries are neither at an advantage or disadvantage during the selection process. Our Jury will be choosing from all of the films we receive in order to piece together a concert program that features the most outstanding films.

Dates & Deadlines

The timeline of events for Sight of Sound is changing this year. In the past we have hosted the concert screening immediately following the entry deadline, and we’ve noticed this has not always been convenient for our filmmakers who wish to attend the concert screening.

Starting in 2017, entries will be due in May, and concert screening(s) will be hosted during the Dallas Chamber Symphony’s 2017-18 concert season. This will allow a little more time for our jury to complete their review, and several months of lead time for filmmakers to make travel plans to attend their screening at Dallas City Performance Hall.

- **December 1, 2016 by Midnight CST** – Early Bird Film Submission Deadline (\$25 Regular, \$10 Student)
- **May 1, 2017 by Midnight CST** – Film Submission Deadline – Application Period Closes (\$30 Regular, \$15 Student)
- **June 1, 2017** – Notification Date
- **2017/18 Concert Season** – Sight of Sound 2017 concert screening(s) will be held during the Dallas Chamber Symphony’s 2017/18 concert season. The orchestra’s concert season starts in September and runs through June. Specific date(s) for Sight of Sound Festival screening(s) will be announced in early 2017. Filmmakers are encouraged to attend!

Music Selections 2017

The following pieces are the pre-approved music selections for participation in 2017. If you would like to submit a film to a different music selection, submit a Wild Card Request prior to creating your film.

Panorama (2:43)

From Sleeping Beauty

Music by Pyotr Ilyitch Tchaikovsky

Moderate. Incidental. Steady. Tchaikovsky: Nutcracker; Swan Lake; Sleeping Beauty (Highlights), CSR Symphony Orchestra, Michael Halász, Ondrej Lenárd & Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra. Released: Oct 24, 1995 © 1995 Naxos.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/sleeping-beauty-panorama/id19564470?i=19564413>

Scherzo (5:08)

From *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Music by *Felix Mendelssohn*

Playful. Frenetic. Intense. Mendelssohn: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Philharmonia Orchestra & Sir Neville Marriner. Released: Mar 12, 1984, © 1983 Universal International Music B.V.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/midsummer-nights-dream-op.61/id4316276?i=4316125>

Melodie (2:43)

From *Souvenir d'un lieu cher*

Music by *Pyotr Ilyitch Tchaikovsky*, Arr. *Glazunov*

Tranquil. Playful. Violin. Tchaikovsky: *Violin Concerto In D Major - Souvenir D'Un Lieu Cher* (Arr. Glazunov) - Glazunov: *Violin Concerto In a Major*, Vadim Gluzman, Andrew Litton & Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. Released: Jan 01, 2008 @ BIS.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/souvenir-dun-lieu-cher-op./id331611655?i=331611808>

Aquarium (2:02)

From *Carnival of the Animals*

Music by *Camille Saint-Saens*

Moderate. Ethereal. Layered. The Best of Saint-Saëns, Pittsburgh Symphony, Andre Previn conductor, Released: Oct 11, 1994 © 1994 Universal International Music B.V.

Any of the Saint-Saens' *Carnival of the Animals* would be suitable for Sight of Sound. If you use it, make sure you use this same album (Pittsburgh/Previn).

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/le-carnaval-des-animaux-aquarium/id81290754?i=81290807>

Le Cygne, *The Swan* (3:11)

From *Carnival of the Animals*

Music by *Camille Saint-Saens*

Slow. Romantic. Cello. The Best of Saint-Saëns, Pittsburgh Symphony, Andre Previn, Released: Oct 11, 1994 © 1994 Universal International Music B.V.

Any of the Saint-Saens' *Carnival of the Animals* would be suitable for Sight of Sound. If you use it, make sure you use this same album (Pittsburgh/Previn).

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/le-carnaval-des-animaux-le/id81290754?i=81290837>

Finale (2:04)

From *Carnival of the Animals*

Music by *Camille Saint-Saens*

Fast. Driving. Comedic. The Best of Saint-Saëns, Pittsburgh Symphony, Andre Previn, Released: Oct 11, 1994 © 1994 Universal International Music B.V.

Any movement of Saint-Saens' *Carnival of the Animals* would be suitable for Sight of Sound. If you use one, make sure you use this same album (Pittsburgh/Previn).

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/le-carnaval-des-animaux-finale/id81290754?i=81290846>

Summer: Presto, Tempo impetus d'estate (2:49)

From the Four Seasons

Music by Antonio Vivaldi

Fast. Turbulent. Violin. Vivaldi: The Four Seasons, Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Alan Loveday & Sir Neville Marriner. Released: Feb 15, 2000 © 2000 Decca Music Group Limited.

Any movement of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* would be suitable for Sight of Sound. If you use one, make sure you select it from this same album (Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Alan Loveday & Sir Neville Marriner).

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/concerto-for-violin-in-g-minor/id4795632?i=4795547>

Intermezzo (3:54)

From Cavalleria Rusticana

Music by Pietro Mascagni

Slow. Romantic. Strings. Mascagni: Cavalleria Rusticana - Leoncavallo: Pagliacci, Georges Prêtre, Orchestra del Teatro alla Scala di Milano & Plácido Domingo. Released: Oct 21, 2002 © 2002 Decca Music Group Limited.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/cavalleria-rusticana-intermezzo/id80695652?i=80695837>

Morning Mood (4:09)

From Peer Gynt

Music by Edvard Grieg

Moderate. Romantic. Strings. Grieg: Peer Gynt-Suite No. 1, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra & Neeme Järvi. Released: Jun 23, 2009 © 2009 Deutsche Grammophon GmbH, Hamburg.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/peer-gynt-op.-23-incidentals/id319834715?i=319834736>

Prelude Afternoon Faun (9:32)

Music by Claude Debussy

Impressionistic. Whimsical. Modern. Debussy: Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun - Chansons de Bilitis-Jeux – Nocturnes, Louis de Froment & Radio Luxembourg Symphony Orchestra. Released: Oct 09, 2007 © 2007 VOX.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/prelude-lapres-midi-dun-faune/id271590217?i=271590260>

Vocalise (5:50)

Music by Sergei Rachmaninoff

Moderate. Romantic. Violin. The 50 Greatest Pieces of Classical Music, London Philharmonic Orchestra & David Parry. Released: Dec 01, 2009 © 2009 X5 Music Group.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/vocalise-op.-34/id339006385?i=339006701>

The Pines of the Janiculum (6:48)

From Pines of Rome

Music by Ottorino Respighi

Pictorial. Programmatic. Clarinet. Respighi: The Fountains of Rome, The Pines of Rome, Ancient Airs and Dances - Suite III, Boccherini: Quintettino, Albinoni: Adagio in G Minor. Released: Sep 30, 1996 © 1996 Deutsche Grammophon GmbH, Hamburg.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/pines-rome-pines-janiculum/id47125528?i=47125567>