

Future Voices: Virtual Performing Arts Showcase

2020

Life With Harold – Sylvia Sonenstein, Dance
Can't Say No – Sylvia Sonenstein, Dance
Stupid With Love – Sylvia Sonenstein, Voice
Murderer's Lullaby – Zoe Vandermeer, Multiple Categories
Goddess of the Deep – Zoe Vandermeer, Multiple Categories
Chase Macabre – Zoe Vandermeer, Multiple Categories
Where Go the Boats – Rohan Purohit, Voice
Sebben Crudele – Rohan Purohit, Voice
No One Else – Alexis Grasdock
Der Leierman – Noah Sonenstein, Voice
Utérus – Angelina DiFranco, Dance
Hold Fast to Dreams – Grumbling Gryphons Traveling Children's Theater, Theatre
Silver Rain – New Haven Chorale, Voice/Instrumental
Hallelujah, Amen – New Haven Chorale, Voice/Instrumental
Hard Times – Kimber Kristy, Voice
Jalajaksha Varnam Unaccompanied Cello – Rohan Purohit, Instrumental
Valachi Vachchi Unaccompanied Cello – Rohan Purohit, Instrumental
Myself – Lyanne Trieu, Film
Adopted Sisters – Kathryn Beiner and Callista Richard, Film
The Simple Steps Win – Lyanne Trieu, Film
Meditation Room # 5 Mercedes Magnet – Philip Goetz, Film
Corona Times – The Students of Thomas Hooker School, Multiple Categories
Face the Sun – Green Light, Voice/Instrumental
The Social Distance – Green Light, Voice/Instrumental
Small Doses – Green Light, Voice/Instrumental
River Valley Song – David Allen Downs, Voice/Instrumental

About the Artists

Sylvia Sonenstein:

Since the age of two, I have spent my days learning to dance. Dance is a creative outlet I can use to express emotion in a physical form. Unlike other art forms I've pursued, dance is a medium in which I can use my body to physically connect to my feelings and communicate story. In these videos, I am performing my tap solos that my dance teacher and I choreographed for competition. Another reason for loving dance is the joy I get to bring to the people watching me. I choose to do solos that are funny and entertaining so that I can brighten people's days with my art. Nothing makes me happier than bringing a smile to someone's face. I love these solos because I get to connect with the audience and bring them joy.

Getting into Musical Theatre is truly one of the best things to have happened to me. I am forever grateful that I discovered an art form in which I can combine and use all of my favorite kinds of art. In this video I am singing one of my favorite songs from the musical Mean Girls. In this song Cady (the main character) sings about her past "failed loves" and how she is now struck with a realization of how wonderful love can be. I love this musical because it is directly connected to teens and I can relate to most of the characters in some way or another. The way in which I can connect to an audience whilst performing is what inspires me to create. Getting to be a character for someone to relate to and thus discover more about themselves is something I wouldn't trade for the world.

Zoe Vandermeer:

My goal in all of my work is to move people, - to transform them through music, voice, story, and emotions to a place of greater awareness and compassion for themselves and the world around them. A running theme in my life and creative work is simply, - do we, or do we not forgive those who have hurt us deeply? I created 'Zoe's Musical Fairy Tale, Upon A Time', as a way to reflect this human journey of searching for one's true path, finding true love, overcoming obstacles, and deciding to forgive (or not) the great evils of this world. Like many on this beloved planet, I have suffered much and deeply from the abuse of others. That was the past. In looking for even the smallest glimmer of light within the darkness, I have been able to move step by step into the sunshine, - one thought, one hope at a time.

It's a message that I feel compelled to share with the world.

Rohan Purohit:

When I was younger, music was a part of my day. In 5th grade I started voice lessons and cello lessons. I have been training in western classical music for approximately 6 years and have really enjoyed it. My main focus is the traditional Western Classical music. I have played and sung in many musical ensembles and have found all these experiences very rewarding. Being in a musical ensemble is an important part of becoming a musician. It allows you to meet new people and create friendships. Over my summers I have played in several chamber music groups and I met a lot of new people who

were just like me from all over the world. I love participating in choir and chamber music groups. I continue to be a part of the "Mill River String Quartet" in New Haven.

My mom is trained in Indian Carnatic music. I began to arrange Carnatic music for cello which has rarely been done. This was my way of connecting to my cultural roots. These pieces are usually sung and are related to invocations to God. This music is similar to Western Classical music in that it has multiple movements. I have arranged and played many Carnatic pieces. I will be presenting two pieces Jalajaksha Varnam and Valachi Vachchi Varnam which are short songs. Playing these pieces during this period of strife brought peace to me and my family. This kind of music is not played on the cello and I hope to bring more diversity to the cello music repertoire.

Alexis Grasdock:

My name is Alexis Grasdock. I am 14 years old and a freshman at Lyme-Old Lyme High School.

I want to be a part of the Voices for Hope and LUNCH mission because I have a great passion for singing. It has always been a part of me, and my love for singing grows everyday as I continue to challenge myself and work hard. I believe that being able to feed my passion while helping others is a very wonderful thing. I am so glad to have been given this opportunity, and I really hope that I make it, not just so that I can sing, but also so that I can support the lives of those who are in need.

Noah Sonenstein:

I chose to add Der Leiermann to my repertoire because the song highlights the way we, as a society, do not see the daily plight of the poor and destitute. This is by no means a new problem, but I found the image of the homeless man being ignored by people on the street a compelling symbol for the increasing division in our country between the haves and the have-nots. I find singing to be the most direct way I can communicate emotions to an audience. The music allows communication to and from the artist in a profound way.

Angelina DiFranco:

My identity as a woman immersed within a country infamous for sterilization abuse, expropriating women's autonomy over their power of choice, and allocating sexist and sexually abusing men into positions of leadership has brought upon an air heavy with apprehension, fear, and the awareness that while I behold certain privileges, there are women oppressed to barbaric conditions, isolated and confined upon using their voices. The United States Immigrations and Customs Enforcement has allegedly performed nonconsensual hysterectomies on women, invading and ransacking their bodies, and depriving them of the ability to decide to carry and birth a child. The notion of mass sterilization abuse and forcing or coercing women to undergo an irreversible procedure is in itself nauseating and mentally monumental. However, there are women who have spent the entirety of their lives working to free themselves from conditions of affliction, abuse, rape, and inhuman treatment that look to the United States for asylum and self-determination only to be subject to further exploitation, coercion, and detention for speaking against the cruelties imposed on them. The female uterus and its susceptibility to hysterectomies and tubal ligations became my muse. Working with the uterus as my muse, has inspired me to continue discovering a muse within myself, my own identity, and my ability

to expand upon it to relate to the social and political climate we are currently undergoing. I also hope to emphasize the voices of women that cannot be heard and for those desperate for justice.

Leslie Elias, Artistic Director of Grumbling Gryphons Traveling Children's Theatre:

Hold Fast To Dreams is the name of the poem written by the great Langston Hughes, an African American poet whose poetry has inspired me to create theater with young people based upon poetry of renowned poets as well as creating new work with children. This poem has supported me through my life and become part of my improvisational work with children over the years. Enacted by three young drama students who attended Grumbling Gryphons Theater Camp during our 40th year this summer, Grumbling Gryphons Theater is now celebrating forty years. Videographer Ben Willis shot this film recently, during the fall of the pandemic by the lake near my home in West Cornwall, CT. It portrays the need for hope and believing in one's dreams especially in light of Covid-19.

Working outside in the chilly air was both refreshing and challenging. It was a welcome relief to feel free to be able to move together in awesome surroundings. I chose this newly created short piece because of the beauty of working with children outside in nature. Our hopes and dreams need to be nurtured all year round, but particularly during this time of the pandemic.

Let us stay positive and join together!

New Haven Chorale:

The COVID pandemic and its impact on families, friends, and choral groups have been significant. Moving into the virtual choral world of online gatherings, rehearsals and classes, maintaining a vital sense of community, and producing virtual choir performances has been a challenge and steep learning curve, but not without its hidden blessings! While we acknowledge with love and empathy the difficulties and losses that so many have endured, the New Haven Chorale believes we still need to move forward with energy and a positive attitude. After all, what is an artistic community if not a place to use our art to comfort and console, as well as energize and inspire each other and the wider community?

The New Haven Chorale has produced four virtual choir projects to date, two that have already been released online, and two more that will be released on Youtube between December 18th and January 10th. Each of these choral projects emphasizes an aspect of positivity needed during these challenging times. We are happy to submit two virtual choir performances to the Shoreline Alliance's FUTURE VOICES project:

'Silver Rain' reminds us to be grateful for all of our loved ones, families, and friends. Even though we may not be able to gather in ways that we prefer, 'Silver Rain' emphasizes GRATITUDE for the many gifts we do continue to receive and reminds us to look forward to days of normalcy that we will never again ever take for granted.

'Hallelujah Amen' by Handel is a burst of pure energy and joy that contains a positive attitude and compelling vitality! This lively piece by Handel embodies the CELEBRATION OF LIFE itself, reminding us to stay focused on the many wonderful gifts that still surround us amidst the challenges.

Kimber Kristy:

I wrote, performed, and created a music video for my song titled "Hard Times" as a tribute to healthcare workers, first responders, essential job workers, and all people who have been helping others through COVID-19. My music video features over 70 of these COVID-19 heroes from 14 different states, including healthcare workers from Guilford, Yale New Haven Hospital and the VA Hospital in West Haven. Many of these medical staff workers treated vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 epidemic, including refugees and people with serious mental illnesses and eating disorders. In addition, I included in the music video important frontline workers at department and home improvement stores, along with essential administrative staff.

During April 2020, when all the stores were shut down, and the streets were empty because of COVID-19, the heartfelt messages of thanks everywhere were so encouraging, painted on store windows and crafted on homemade lawn signs and even on mailboxes. I wanted to use my music video to highlight these inspirational signs, banners, and artwork in photos taken at various stores around the Green, as well as along Route 1 and on the Shoreline.

Since my music video was created in April 2020, a number of the people in the video became ill with COVID-19 thereafter. They all have continued to risk their lives for more than 9 months. As a musician who grew up on the Connecticut Shoreline, but found myself in lockdown in Los Angeles, this song and video was my way to try to thank them.

Lyanne Trieu:

Myself is about a high schooler named Lyanne (aka me) who's struggling with online class. The music (played by me) in the background is supposed to represent what's it like internally, a mess and full of confusion. My paths internally can go either into a nervous and meticulous breakdown (explains the blue outfit later on) or in a bittersweet but motivating mindset (explains the green outfit later on). This short film mainly depicts how mental health during quarantine is hard to handle, especially for those who're in school. Especially as it's very stressful and isolating going through a (now) normal day in the life when you're supposed to appear content.

The Simple Steps Win is about a girl who's been curious about discrimination. A lot of dialogue has been put into here because she does like to talk to herself a lot. This is more about her trying to understand how it's so easy to discriminate someone regardless of how they appear and how her and others dealing with it gives much of a fuss. Generally, it does kind of depict how I'm like as a person. I am also very curious and wonder why people do and don't do specific actions. Especially as an Asian American, I continue to learn everyday (and sometimes experience) about global discrimination.

Kathryn Beiner and Callista Richard:

Our names are Kathryn Beiner and Callista Richard, and we attend Daniel Hand High School in Madison. We are co presidents of the Girls United organization with Madison Youth and Family Services at Daniel Hand, and this film is brought to you by these organizations. We would like to give a special shout out to the incredible painter and mentor behind these portraits of inspirational women: Steven Pynn. 'Adopted Sisters' was created based on Warren Buffet's famous quote, "Tell me who your heroes are, and I'll tell you how you are going to turn out". We hope each and every

young woman and young person out there is reminded when they watch this film to emulate the qualities these inspirational role models show us and adopt them as their 'sisters' as they go through life.

Philip Goetz:

I am an artist who has worked in multiple mediums including traditional 2D materials (drawing, painting, mixed media) along with multi-media (film, video, performance and music). In the past half dozen years I have integrated a number of different mediums into a series of extended, non-narrative meditation pieces. Interesting, this evolved prior to the outbreak of the CORONA Virus, but has taken on a different life in the present sequestered state we all now exist.

I presented this work in November 2019 at the Shore Line Artist Trail in an installation piece entitled "Meditation Room". This installation includes an enclosed space with reclining chairs and a projector and speakers that showed the first of the meditation room series.

Over the past year I have created 5 meditation room video pieces, each with original music I composed. The visuals are a combination of life experience materials and 3 dimensional fractal videos I developed over the course of the past five years. The total work to date includes over 2 and ½ hours of material. This work is currently in rotation on Friday evenings on Southern Connecticut Television SEC-TV.org.

I am submitting the 5th, most recent piece entitled: Mercedes Magnet.

This piece exemplifies the enclosed world we are self imposed to reside. With expansive 3D fractal world juxtaposed by a puzzle (of a world map and exotic places, where we can only imagine visiting). The meditation piece including the music is intended to "infiltrate" a mind cluttered with the noise of our current lives, freeing it to wander out into the space beyond our current constrictions.

The Students of Thomas Hooker School:

Corona Times is a product of collaboration between students of Thomas Hooker school and 2 teaching artists who adapted the students' words and feelings into song and music video. Then vision for this was also a collaboration between the 2 teaching artists Iyaba Ibo Mandingo, Fuzz Sangiovanni and Suzanne Kachmar, the executive director of City Lights/Bridgeport Art Trail.

As the father of 5 children, poet/performer/visual artist, Iyaba Ibo Mandingo knew the youth need a creative outlet for the stressors they are confronting during. Kachmar brought songwriter/composer/producer/teaching artist Fuzz Sangiovanni to the project suggesting that the words be put to music. Fuzz collaborated with the students as he guided them through the process of songwriting. The students practiced their parts, and their voices were recorded for the audio and video production. Visuals were contributed from the Bridgeport Art trail community. The image "We Will Make It" was created by Dan Makara and portrait photography by Dariusz Kanarek. The music video debuted for the 2020 Bridgeport Art Trail

Green Light:

What began as recording some ideas on piano during the first few weeks of quarantine, quickly turned into a full-fledged creative process. At first it was a way to combat boredom, eventually it became a completely new passion. In the end, an album called "The Days" was born. We wrote, recorded and produced this album ourselves entirely remotely between March and July of 2020.

The album chronicles 'the days' spent at home moving through stressors that quarantine brought like anxiety, boredom, sadness, anger, restlessness, and family; while also touching on tender moments, achieving new understanding, discovering new passions and even finding true love (something that actually happened to one of us!).

As each of these stories unfolded, we tried to embrace and flesh out each of their sentiments by incorporating new elements into our music. This included collaborating with other vocalists, having a rap verse, creating our own samples from newscasts, using strings & horns and even obtaining the rights to include a cover song that we felt nicely summarized an overall understanding about ourselves during this time.

Included here are three songs from the album that we feel represent the various pieces mentioned above:

Face the Sun – includes a collaboration with Ryan Sindler, from the band Private Language. One of the first songs recorded, taking the chance to reach out to Ryan, and then hearing what he added to the song, gave us the confidence to really try anything on this album.

The Social Distance – we loved this music for this song, but felt like it was a bit of a caricature, so we tried our hand at some satire to capture the overall crazy feeling of April/May 2020.

Small Doses – the realization that you have all you need, but that a little space is also sometimes okay.

David Allen Downs:

I, David Allen Downs, am a 59-year old writer, musician, performer and social services worker, here in Middletown, Connecticut, USA. Back in August, 2014, I was privileged to have the Honorable Mayor Daniel T. Drew inaugurate me as a Music Ambassador to the City of Middletown.

It's a privilege to have the opportunity to submit one of my little songs, 'River Valley Song,' to The Shoreline Arts Alliances. It was written and recorded over the last few days.

My literary stories all take place in the small riverfront, fictional City of Sowheag, located somewhere on the Eastern Seaboard of the U.S.A., where seasons change and shadows grow long.

Sowheag may or may not resemble my home of Middletown, CT.

Thank you for watching!