



❖ Newsletter for Winter, 2019-2020 ❖

Welcome to ASIFA Central! We are the midwest chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators in the world. Our chapter was established in 1975. While our community is separated by our far-flung geography, we are united by our love of animation. Our diverse membership is made of independent animators, animation artists, professors, seasoned pros, students, and fans of the art of animation. We have a robust board working on a number of initiatives for 2020 including Ani-Jam's, Bi-monthly get-togethers, and an annual midwest retreat.

Now THAT's What I Call a MESSAGE!

A Few Words from R. Brad Yarhouse, ASIFA Central President

Dear ASIFA friends,

As I am thinking forward to next year, I want to let you know some of the great events and activities that your membership contribution provides for central U.S. chapter and ASIFA international. We are a volunteer run, 501c3 non-profit that supports the midwest of the United States with the goal to help promote progress towards peace and mutual understanding between all people as part of the *Association Internationale du Film d'Animation*. This coming year marks the 60th anniversary of our international UNESCO chartered organization!



"I will never reveal the contents of my travel mug."

This past year, members had the opportunity to animate in an internationally shown **ANI-JAM**, submit their films for showing around the world, make films together, explore techniques, and deliver papers at our annual retreat at Webster University in St. Louis. Our members organized and showed animation as part of *Site Lab* event in Grand Rapids, MI called **Project 1**. ASIFA partnered with the *Thriller Chiller Film Festival* to show *Evil Dead* with guest animator/effects guru **Tom Sullivan**. We celebrated **International Animation Day** this year with animation showings in Grand Rapids, Detroit, and St. Louis! Our chapter also launched a newly redesigned web site.

Our chapter is in the planning stages for doing a series of workshops, along with member meet and greet animation showings. Plans are already underway for our 2020 retreat—which will be announced soon (*spoiler alert - think MOTOWN*). There are many international plans in the works for the 60th anniversary of ASIFA, including the creation of a short film to represent our Central chapter in a special celebration for International Animation Day. It will be shown with other short films around the world! We even kicked off the new year with a fun Christmas Card animation party on January 3rd in Grand Rapids, MI.

My goal as president is to find ways to collaborate and spread the opportunities around our region. I would love to hear your ideas on how we can make ASIFA Central connect with you and your area of the great midwest. Please note that your membership or end of year donation is potentially a tax deductible contribution to our 501c3 depending on your local state laws.

The Best Wishes in 2020!

– Brad

ASIFA Central Board (but never bored)



President and IAD Multiverse Traveler
Brad Yarhouse

Secretary of Unfocused Distractions and Cracked Fonts
Jim Middleton

Coordinator for Membership and Technological Phenomena
Charles Wilson

Treasurer and International ASIFA Star of Stage, Screen, and Free Range Chickens
Deanna Morse

Social Media, Analog Conversions, and Ink Tester
Christopher Sagovac

Interlocutor of Projects and Public Works
Gretchen Vinnedge

Award Winning, Best-Dressed Film Director and ASIFA Central Website Commando
Julie Goldstein

Molder of Youthful Minds and Keeper of Esoteric Knowledge
Steve Leeper

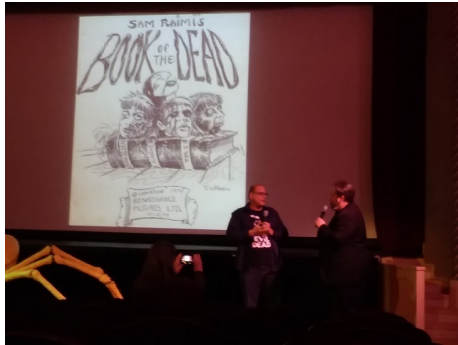
Tallest Human Ever to Animate
Robert Swieringa

Stopped Motionator and Tripod Convergence Coordinator
Gary Schwartz

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, JULY 18-19! THE ASIFA CENTRAL SUMMER RETREAT WILL TAKE PLACE IN DETROIT!! DETAILS SOON!

Tom Sullivan in Thriller! Chiller!

The Thriller! Chiller! Film Festival has been an October Grand Rapids staple since 2006, presenting films and discussions ranging from classic horror to skewed animation. This year, ASIFA Central was able to



sponsor the participation of Michigan animator and special effects artist, Tom Sullivan, just in time for the presentation of a 4K

restoration of the 16mm classic, *Evil Dead*. Tom Sullivan created the effects and new uses for oatmeal while animating the deliciously gooey experience, while the unpadded pacing of director Sam Raimi made the film feel fresh even as it approached its 40th birthday.

Tom was a ubiquitous presence at the Wealthy theater the entire evening of October 12, before, after, and during the film, discussing pre-computer techniques and the challenges of producing a masterpiece on a shoestring budget. Tom has always been generous with his time to local schools and community colleges, adding insight to film production and championing the creative spirit.



Tom Sullivan describes the best formula for fake blood - It's delicious!

Julie Goldstein and *Allegro non Troppo* - at the Muskegon Block Film Festival (press release)

Directed by Bruno Bozzetto, this film is a "gorgeous send-up of *Fantasia*" with a sly sense of humor. It features six animated shorts synchronized with six iconic classical music works, including Debussy's *Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun*, Ravel's *Bolero*, and music by Tchaikovsky, Dvóřák, Sibelius, Stravinsky, and Vivaldi. In between each short are vignettes featuring a sleazy promoter, a bully conductor, a harried animator, and an all-female geriatric orchestra. The panelists for discussion were Andy Buelow, Executive Director of West Michigan Symphony; and Julie Goldstein, Assistant Professor and Animation Emphasis Coordinator, GVSU Film & Video Production. (And ASIFA Central member with the BEST BASEMENT!)

"It was so wonderful to have the opportunity to be interviewed on our local NPR station!" said Julie. "We talk about *Movies and Music at the Block* in Muskegon, and *Allegro non Troppo* was the first film to be shown that Wednesday night."

Craving more? Julie Goldstein, and West Michigan Symphony's Andy Beulow discuss the Italian film *Allegro non Troppo*." in this bit of creative pod castery:

https://cpa.ds.npr.org/.../audio/2020/01/the_block_1-13-20.mp3

(By the way, a typist's note here - if you aren't crying after the cat's performance from "Valse Triste," you have no soul.)



A discarded Coke bottle creates an evolutionary march to

Ravel's *Bolero* in *Allegro non Troppo* (1977)

OIAF - Ottawa International Animation Festival - the reason Septembers were invented (September 24-29, 2019, anyway)



Photo by Gary Schwartz

There is an ebb and flow to the animation industry. In the early 1980s, it wasn't a hot commodity to be an animator, and festivals were gatherings to swap stories about grant restrictions, doing more with less, and fretting about the projectionist scratching your only 16mm sound print. Then the success of *Roger Rabbit* and *The Little Mermaid* made animators and animation interesting (i.e., *monster profitable*), and festivals were jammed to see the latest innovation from Pixar and party with June Foray. Then *Home on the Range* and similar production saturations re-created discussions about budget restrictions, closed studios, layoffs, and worries that your codec wouldn't be compatible.

The past ten years have brought back the enthusiasm, and the OIAF experience is again a blend of electron-free styles, minimalist performances with agility trumping technology, and the sense that animation is, after all, a poetic means of self expression – and that there is no "right way" besides just diving in and doing it, with technology actually being helpful at times.

ASIFA Central member Charles Wilson, in his extensive Smudge Animation blog, <http://smudge.biz> has documented experiences attending the OIAF and other festivals, and also provides survival tips on attending a festival. His insights on that process alone are priceless. (Major hint - if you can, get a suite with a washer/dryer included - you'll be able to pack like a pro, AND you'll save time by not worrying about whether it's you or the touching film on screen bringing tears to the eyes of the audience. Bring along some detergent pods and you'll save even more time trekking around town. See the sights, not a dollar store)

Feature upon feature, short upon short, technique upon technique... and behind the scenes panel discussions from Disney, a pumpkin-slaughter fest at the picnic, and poutine. Canadian poutine. Canadian poutine and a Guinness. A Guinness record for Canadian poutine. You can get poutine in Ottawa at 4am. An evening of animation, a Guinness and poutine at 4am, followed by some ketchup potato chips. Save the digestives for the next morning (another survival tip). Don't tip the Canadian customs guards, and don't bring back more than 100ml of maple syrup. There are limits even to Canadian manners.



Because you can never get enough Canadian sodium...

images courtesy of Gary Schwartz, inveterate shutterbug, and Jim Middleton, blurred by reality



Explanation of mysteries - clockwise - Chris Robinson providing cheesecake while in repose, the need for a civilization in North America, a bird giving the audience a Chris, Ottawa's sister city in the fifth dimension (mayor Mxyzptlk), Steve Stanchfield recruiting future archivists, Thomas Renoldner accepting a Major Award -The Nelvana Grand Prize for Independent Short Animation for Don't Know What; proof that you need some stinkin' badges, Lizzy Hobbs and her signal film introduction for the festival, Kathy Rose creating magic with a sheet, projector, and amazing flexibility; and a tour bicycle with certain limitations, but with a fantastic clakkety clakkety clack sound as you ride down Rideau Street. In the center is why your humble typist did not have pumpkin pie this past Thanksgiving. A final note before being distracted by all that poutine again - the 2019 festival was channeling a lot of 1980s memories, notably with the recurrence of early computer animation styles and video games - the trend continues with finding nostalgia for Whatever Was Big 40 years earlier. Apparently we sometimes miss a time without cell phones or the internet. Hmmm.....

ASIFA International Update with Deanna Morse, Vice President, ASIFA *International* - Contact: morsed@gvsu.edu
It's already 2020, and this marks the 60th Anniversary of our international organization, ASIFA.

As you probably know, ASIFA was founded at the Annecy Animation Festival, by several important animators of the time, including Norman McLaren (who was elected as the first President) and John Halas (elected as the second President). The organization was chartered under UNESCO, with the basic goals of furthering the art of animation, fostering international communication through the art of animation, and supporting world peace.

There are a number of proposed activities ... We will definitely mark this birthday at several important international festivals. There is discussion of compiling curated animation reels that represent the themes and change of animation over the decades. A few folks are researching stickers, commemorative pins and other swag options. And, as you know, IAD is mounting a special animation challenge, creating films that express our individual cultural identities. Hats off to our President and IAD Coordinator Brad Yarhouse.

ASIFA International currently has more than 30 chapters, and also has individual members from countries where there is not a critical mass of animators in one region.

Almost all the chapters are volunteer run, although some have offices and staff.

We actually have a financial reserve that we are looking to invest in activities during this next few years. If you have ideas for projects that would benefit our international organization, please let me know.

And, if you are interested in being part of the volunteer team, please let me know and I will put you in touch with Anastasia Dimitra (Hellas, formerly Greece), the 60th Anniversary coordinator.

Happy Anniversary to us!



A Reboot of Grotesqueries - Steve Stanchfield and Thunderbean Animation

Steve Stanchfield, with his unending quest for obscure and historic images, works on existing projects when not battling the labyrinthine Minotaur of Felix the Cat copyrights (whose 100th birthday should have been cause for greater celebration at Universal, but that's another *tail*). The fun Halloween compilation entitled *Grotesqueries* has been reworked into Blu-ray format with some added features. If you haven't already worn out your previous DVD version, it remains a whimsical delight, and it's time to upgrade!

Project-1/ASIFA Central Installation at Tanglefoot

The rebranded Grand Rapids ArtPrize afforded some timesharing between Julie Goldstein and ASIFA Central the weekend before Halloween, and the temperature was - well, let's just remember it was Michigan, after all. Nevertheless, a handful of members inhabited the frosty digs of the old Tanglefoot flypaper factory building on Grand Rapids' south side. Gretchen Vinnedge set up a Dragonframe station, Brad Yarhouse ran films to test for IAD, and Julie Goldstein presented examples of her innovations and abstractions amid an overview of historic animation. After an hour or so, representatives from Project-1 came in and closed a large delivery door, wondering how we were managing with that level of Michigan fresh air. Flypaper chemicals, Michigan frostiness - but these are ANIMATORS! Pain is a foreign concept to them. Next year - stop motion ice sculptures (they may be self-portraits!).



IAD Showings -Grand Rapids

Brad Yarhouse, already serving as curator for the international day films, also arranged the venue at Kendall College's Fed Galleries for an evening of International ASIFA films interspersed with a Swiss compilation animation. The Swiss films were linked by an overall theme of a surprise birthday party. A *meta moment* in one of the Swiss films: one neolithic creature chasing another gets a phone call and has to ring off because "I'm in the middle of an animation." Anything can happen in a cartoon, including the unexpected aggression of a machine-gun mamma of animal super heroes.



Over 40 attendees experienced IAD at the Fed Gallery, with ASIFA Central's *Anijam 19* and Gary Schwartz's *Spencer's Slightly Imperfect Peep Show* introducing the evening. Chris Sullivan's *Orbit of Minor Satellites*, Steve Leeper's production *Fireflower*, and Deanna Morse's *The Gift* added to ASIFA Central's contribution. The creator of the 2019 IAD poster, Giannis Koutsouris, was given a spotlight with one of his early 16mm works, *Line*, a European parable of fighting oppression.



Art everywhere at the Fed Gallery

NEWSFLASH!!!

"The Ann Arbor Film Festival team is pleased to announce that Gary Schwartz's film, SPENCER'S SLIGHT IMPERFECT PEEP SHOW A.K.A. MICRO-BURLESQUE, has been selected for this year's 58th AAFF, held March 24-29, 2020."

The Reason is Just a Subterfuge - Julie Goldstein has a BASEMENT



OK, Deanna came back to Michigan in November - so LET'S PARTY! We brought toys! We brought film prints! We brought nachos! We drank coffee and carbonated beverages with various levels of physiological impact. We fretted over budgets! We got lost amid the one-way streets of eastern Grand Rapids! And we watched cartoons! But most importantly, we left a trail of breadcrumbs to come back in January AND DO IT ALL AGAIN. Welcome 2020 - you don't know what is about to hit you!



Upcoming Adjustments to the Chapter's By-Laws

Every few years, the ASIFA Central board reviews its organizational by-laws and looks to make adjustments reflecting the needs and involvement of its members. 2020 is going to be one of those years. Members will be getting updates on proposed adjustments, amendments, and changes in the chapter by-laws as the board's ongoing meetings progress. Mail and electronic announcements will soon populate your inboxes!

Raymond Scott Puts Up His Hair - discovery in audio

Raymond Scott's works are very familiar to fans of Warner Brothers animation - his compositions were arranged by Carl Stalling and punctuate nearly every move in a typical Roadrunner cartoon, among many others. He was amazingly popular with his atypical rhythms and audio experiments, right in the middle of the great Depression, and influenced a lot of musicians with his style and multilayered melodies.

So this portion of my column isn't really a public domain issue, as the material is more a mid-century vintage, but a small album entitled, *Raymond Scott and His Orchestra play...*, appeared among some 10 inch LPs. I was expecting, well, a *Twilight in Turkey* or *Devil Drums* adventure. Um, not so much...

It made me recall an interview with Frank Zappa where he said he was pleased to create arrangements for his compositions that would wedge nicely into an elevator or dental experience. This early LP of Raymond Scott performing "for your listening and dancing pleasure" comes as a similar aural shock, especially from the man who brought us *Powerhouse* and *Dinner Music for a Pack of Hungry Cannibals*. He does get to include two of his own compositions (*Huckleberry Duck* and *Coming Down to Earth*), but each euphonic arrangement could have been comfortably performed by the Glenn Miller or Benny Goodman bands. I suspect he was bankrolling some of his Clavivox experiments, or just making use of his experience conducting for the "Your Hit Parade" orchestra. It was a pleasant discovery.



Animation for the Ear (public domain music discussion series) - with Jim Middleton

First of all, what does *public domain* look like, if you are dealing with early recorded material? In 2019, the magic year for PD was 1923. This year, it's do the math.... wait for it... 1924.

It can be a bit tricky to identify a year, since early 78rpms were cluttered with patent dates and no indication of when things were recorded. However, Columbia recordings provide certain visual signals to their age. It appears that in 1917, their studios were working overtime to fill dealer shelves with classical selections. So if you see a record with the "banner label" on your right, you're looking at material from 1917 to 1922. These are acoustic recordings, so that means the fidelity is a bit "soft" (ok, absolutely archaic), but they can serve as a basis for projects - or "background" sounds.



For 1923 to 1925, Columbia used this "flag label" on the left for their recordings. Again, these are all acoustic, as the company was preparing to switch to its electric systems in 1925 under a new "Viva-Tonal" label. That material will have to wait for public domain status, but it's coming quickly....until then, thrill with the notion of *Rhapsody in Blue* being public domain.

The other thing I have noticed is the challenge in tracking down copyright pathways or possible bootlegged material, and whether such can still serve a purpose. What can be the value of public domain material performed in anonymity, sandwiched between material where licenses to perform have apparently never been procured?

Over 20 years ago, I found a four-CD set entitled *Classics for Children*, featuring music "As Performed By The World's Greatest Orchestra's" (sic). The (sic) was my first red flag. The listing of selections was my second - *The Lion King*, *Pocahontas*, *Cinderella*, *Pinocchio*, *Aladdin* were among the cover listings. The images on the cover were generic, cartoony animals, with no artist identification.

It had no booklet, no "listing of Orchestras, Soloists, and Conductors" as promised on the backside. But most tellingly, *it had no mention anywhere of Disney or any licensing agreement with the Disney company*. My third red flag.



The "suites" on each CD are certainly Disney material - *The Lion King Symphonic Suite*, *Beauty and the Beast Symphonic Suite*, all broken into sub-category descriptions of the songs included - *The Circle of Life*, *Whistle While You Work*, and so on.

After each "suite" are some standard public domain musical pieces - *William Tell Overture*, *Nutcracker Suite*, *Swan Lake*, *In the Hall of the Mountain King*. Nicely performed, but again, no credit to an orchestra, soloist, or conductor. And there was still that troubling apostrophe "s" on the cover for a plural of orchestra.

The discs themselves were colorfully produced and the sound balanced, but no credit to composers or mention of Disney.

There were some names mentioned on the back of the box - GSC Music, Michele Audio Corporation, Entertainment Distributing, and Jerry Ward Design. The latter two mentioned Oregon as an apparent home base. It was even assigned a catalogue number - 15245. EDI claimed © of 1996, and Michele Audio Corporation claimed a (P) of 1996.

And, so, the exploration began. Twenty three years had passed since these discs were issued, on the edge of the internet explosion. What sort of online footprint could be found?

To sum it up, extremely little about any of the parties could be uncovered. The image above is the Google location for an empty building representing the only physical address for any of the sites, and it isn't in Oregon.

Ultimately, I'm not really interested in getting access to Disney rights to their music - far from it. If, however, it can be determined that these performances of public domain symphonic pieces has been gleaned from Indian, Chinese, or Korean orchestras (none are named) or from areas that don't share copyright concerns with the rest of the planet, well, that's one nice piece from *Swan Lake* I'd love to use...

Stay tuned!

