

THE SEVEN LAST WORDS

An Original Idea by
KAVEH NABATIAN



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Maison 4:3 presents
A Microclimat Films Production

THE SEVEN LAST WORDS

An Original Idea by Kaveh Nabatian

A Film by Juan Andrés Arango, Sophie Deraspe,
Sophie Goyette, Karl Lemieux, Ariane Lorrain,
Caroline Monnet, Kaveh Nabatian

Produced by Catherine Chagnon

The Seven Last Words sounds out experiential states and rituals particular to humanity, based on the seven themes expressed in a musical composition: forgiveness, salvation, relationship, abandonment, distress, triumph, and reunion.

Seven award-winning Canadian filmmakers of diverse origins and art practices explore a wealth of human experience and feeling, based on the seven phrases at the origin of Franz Joseph Haydn's classical masterpiece.

The film will be accompanied by a live performance of *The Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross*, interpreted by the London-based Callino String Quartet.

The result is a wonderfully resonant event that opens a new dialogue between film and music.

*The Seven Last Words
of Our Saviour on the Cross*

WRITTEN BY FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN
PERFORMED BY CALLINO QUARTET

HELENA WINKELMAN (violon)
TOM HANKEY (violon)
REBECCA JONES (viola)
SARAH McMAHON (cello)



In the late 18th century, Franz Joseph Haydn was commissioned to create a composition based on the seven immortal phrases that the Bible claims Jesus uttered while dying on the cross. Composing a separate sonata to evoke each “word”, Haydn’s opus 51 is considered one of the most beautiful pieces of classical music, particularly the version written for string quartet. Since its inception, the seven sonatas have been performed in settings that catalyze the incredible power and drama of the music. Expanding on this tradition, I directed the creation of a seven-part film, *The Seven Last Words*, which will be presented with a live interpretation of Haydn’s composition by the Callino String Quartet.

Despite the Christian origins of the words of a man confronted by death, the themes of abandonment, mortality, fear, and hope are absolutely universal. For this reason, I thought it was crucial that filmmakers with different backgrounds, approaches, and points of view interpret the words. So, along with producer Catherine Chagnon, I carefully curated six Canadian filmmakers with a diversity of cultural origins and filmmaking practices, from Indigenous to Hispanic to Iranian, and from fiction to documentary to experimental. Despite the diversity of approaches, the seven parts of the film are linked by a consistent vision and set of parameters that I created, which forms the emotional spine of the film-concert.

The biblical story of the seven words addresses themes that remain urgent and visceral in these challenging times, and begs to be addressed with a contemporary perspective. Embracing this creative process brought us to immerse ourselves at the confluence of story, music, and filmmaking—where instinct leads to pure expression

— KAVEH NABATIAN

INTRODUZIONE

Kaveh Nabatian

The music begins with power and determination, slowly giving way to a delicate melody. An elderly woman is facing her own mortality. Walking along a rural airstrip in southern Haiti, she gets into a tiny airplane piloted by Baron Samedi, the Haitian Vodou spirit who guards cemeteries. As they fly higher and higher into the sky, she looks down at the world beneath, reflecting on her life. When the Baron nods at her she opens the door of the airplane and jumps out. At first, she's terrified, tumbling through the air, but as she accepts her fate, she begins to dance with the air currents, elegantly submitting to the unknown.

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM,
FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO

— *Forgiveness* —
Ariane Lorrain

During the month of Muharram in Iran the ta'zieh, a form of Passion Play, performs the barbarity of humanity through reenactments of Imam Hussein's martyrdom. It reinforces the moral and cosmic orders of its participants, the crowd. These are all sinners who must seek forgiveness for the loss of a just hero. As the night falls, the collective mourning rituals go beyond the stage and hit the cities' streets. The reconciliation of God and humankind—the doctrine of Atonement—is retrieved through suffering but also through life, which takes on bold colours and a vivid energy proper to Southern Iran before flowing back to its normal course.

TRULY, I SAY TO YOU, TODAY YOU WILL
BE WITH ME IN PARADISE

— *Salvation* —
Sophie Goyette

A moral dilemma, a touching gesture, so many irrational reminders that certain emotional connections become markers of hope in seemingly hopeless circumstances.

WOMAN, BEHOLD YOUR SON! BEHOLD
YOUR MOTHER!

— *Relationship* —
Juan Andrés Arango

A diptych of death and rebirth focusing on the daily routine of a sailor on the remotes rivers of Southern Colombia and a fisherman on North Coast of Quebec.

MY GOD, MY GOD,
WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?

— *Abandonment* —
Sophie Deraspe

A frontal examination of the movements of life that demand utter abandon: Birth, Orgasm, Death.

I THIRST
— *Distress* —
Karl Lemieux

An experimental representation of the painful metamorphosis from physical materials into spiritual concepts.

IT IS FINISHED
— *Triumph* —
Kaveh Nabatian

A young boy witnesses adults perform a strange ceremony during a solar eclipse. When all of the adults become frozen in time, he realizes through a vision that he is the only person left on Earth. In keeping with the shifting energy of the music, which moves quickly from lightness to foreboding, the boy's internal world jumps from a sense of freedom to sadness and solitude. He runs to the ocean where he faces an incomprehensible yet hopeful vastness.

FATHER, INTO YOUR HANDS
I COMMIT MY SPIRIT

— *Reunion* —
Caroline Monnet

The Anishinaabe people believe that the dead need to cross a mass of water in order to reunite with ancestors in the next world—a visual representation of a spirit's journey from one water bank to the next.

IL TERREMOTO
Kaveh Nabatian

As the music reaches the frenzied presto that concludes the piece, we catch up with the elderly woman, who is still falling. We see the ground coming. We cut to a glowing box set on the edge of the cliff. Inside the box, a deity tries to escape her walls with wild gestures like if she was fighting with the extreme energy of the music. As the end, the spirit emerges from the box and reborns.

















KAVEH NABATIAN has a BFA in Film Production with a minor in Jazz Studies from Concordia University. He plays trumpet in the avant-chamber ensemble Bell Orchestre, winner of a Juno Award for Best Instrumental Music. His short films *Vapor* (2010) and *Love* (2011) have both screened at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). *Nan Lakou Kanaval* (2014) won the Creativity Prize at the Festival du nouveau cinéma and Best Direction—Quebec at REGARD, the Saguenay International Short Film Festival. Nabatian was nominated for Best Short/Mid-length Film at the 2011 Jutra Awards, as well as Best Live Action Short Drama for *Vapor* at the 2011 Genie Awards.

ARIANE LORRAIN is a documentary filmmaker of Iranian descent based in Montreal. She obtained a BFA in Film Production from Concordia University. Her documentary approach focuses on the senses and their poetic possibilities to convey reality's surrealism, while her hybrid identity leads her to live and create between Montreal and the Middle East. Her short films *Blue Bird* (2011) and *An Arranged Marriage* (2012) are distributed by CBC International and La Distributrice de Films, respectively. Her latest short *Between a Garden and the Sea* (2016) has screened internationally in film festivals, including FNC in Montreal and DocsMx in Mexico. Her first medium-length documentary, *Zagros* (2018), is distributed by Les Films du 3 Mars.

SOPHIE GOYETTE is an award-winning Canadian screenwriter and director. Premiering at the Locarno Film Festival, her fourth short *La ronde* (2011) was selected for Canada's Top Ten and won six prizes, including the Best Short Fiction Award at the Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois. Her fifth short *Le futur proche* (2012) also won six prizes, including the National Award at REGARD during its world premiere, and was selected in the international competition at the 2013 Sundance Festival. *Mes nuits feront écho* (2017) is her first feature and winner of the Bright Future Award at the 2017 International Film Festival Rotterdam.

JUAN ANDRÉS ARANGO was born in Bogota where he studied film and television production at the National University of Colombia. He wrote and directed his first short, *Eloisa y las Nieves* (2002), as his thesis project. He then specialized in photography at ESCAC in Barcelona and currently lives in Montreal. His first feature film, *La Playa D.C.*, premiered in the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes in 2012. His second feature film, *X Quinientos* (2016), was selected to over seventy festivals among them TIFF, Rotterdam and San Sebastián.

SOPHIE DERASPE is both a director and a cinematographer, working mostly in documentary before directing her first feature film, *Missing Victor Pellerin* (2006), which received critical acclaim and was screened throughout the world. Her second film, *Vital Signs* (2009), won fifteen prizes in more than thirty festivals around the world, including Rotterdam, SXSW, and Whistler. She was also nominated for Best Film at the 2011 Jutra Awards. Her third feature film, *Les Loups* (2015), won the FIPRESCI Award at the Torino Film Festival. Her debut feature documentary, *The Amina Profile* (2015), premiered and was nominated for the World Cinema Documentary at the Sundance Festival and won the Special Jury Prize at Hot Docs 2015 before being theatrically released in the U.S.A. and Canada.

KARL LEMIEUX is a filmmaker whose work is inspired by a dialogue between film, music, and sound art. His films, installations, and performances have been presented internationally in museums, galleries, music venues, and film festivals, including the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Austrian Film Museum in Vienna and the Eye Filmmuseum in Amsterdam. In 2010, he began doing live 16mm film projections for Godspeed You! Black Emperor, a Montreal music collective. He is co-founder with Daïchi Saïto of Double Négatif, a Montreal-based collective dedicated to the production and dissemination of experimental films. His first feature, *Maudite Poutine* (2016), premiered in the Orizzonti competition of the 73rd Venice International Film Festival presented by the Venice Biennale.

CAROLINE MONNET is a multidisciplinary artist of Algonquin ancestry from Outaouais, Quebec. She studied Sociology and Communication at the University of Ottawa (Canada) and the University of Granada (Spain) before pursuing a career in visual art and film. Monnet's short films *Ikwé* (2009), *Warchild* (2010), *Mobilize* (2015), *Tshieutin* (2016), *Dada Creatura* (2016), and *Emptying the Tank* (2018) all screened at TIFF. *Gephyrophobia* (2012) screened at Les Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin, and *Mobilize* was selected at the Sundance Film Festival. She was nominated for Best Short Film for *Roberta* (2014) and Best Short Documentary for *Tshieutin* at the Canadian Screen Awards. Her feature film project *Bootlegger* won Best Screenplay at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival, an award granted by the Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée (CNC) and Cinéfondation.

CALLINO QUARTET is widely considered to be one of the finest young ensembles to have emerged in Europe in recent years. They were formed at the West Cork Chamber Music Festival in 1999 where they immediately felt a deep musical affinity. Based now in London, the Callino Quartet is musically versatile and has cultivated an eclectic and challenging repertoire. They have performed and collaborated with many diverse performers and composers including György Kurtág, Edgar Meyer, John Abercrombie, Peteris Vasks, Aleksandra Vrebalov, Kevin Volans, Bell Orchestre and Arcade Fire. They have recorded contemporary works for string quartets by Ian Wilson, John Taverner, Alexander Knaifel and Arvo Pärt. Their recent recording for Coro of *The Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross* by Haydn has met with critical acclaim.

CATHERINE CHAGNON produced *Danse Macabre* in 2008, a critically acclaimed short film that won the TIFF Best Canadian Short Film, Jutra and Genie Awards in 2009. In 2010, Chagnon founded the production company Microclimat Films. Focused on producing innovative projects, she has been involved in numerous productions and co-productions. In 2015, she co-produced the indigenous collective *The Embargo Project*. In 2017, she produced the feature documentary *Rue de la Victoire*, with a world premiere at Hot Docs and an international premiere at El Gouna Film Festival in Egypt. Chagnon is an alumnus of the TIFF Talent Lab 2011, Rotterdam Lab 2012, OMDC International Financing Forum 2015, CineMart 2016, Berlinale Co-Production Market 2016, and BoostNL 2016.

Team

Film-concert 73 minutes No dialogue 2018

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|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|
| Cast | <p>Luc Beauchemin Frédéric Bednarz Nehemiah Brown Clara Furey Marielle Louis Genest Nadège Grebmeir-Forget André-Éric Létourneau Sarah McMahon Addison McPhail Bojana Milinov Mahasin Mohemmad Axelle Munezero Jonathan Parant Jérôme Pouliot Weimar Jose Celorio Renteria Kathia Rock Darius James Rodney Alexandre Saint-Onge Monique Thellend</p> | Financing | Telefilm Canada, SODEC, PRIM, The Canada Council for the Arts, Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, Fondation canadienne de la vidéo religieuse, Arsenal Contemporary |
| | | Market | OMDC's 10th Anniversary Edition of the International Financing Forum (IFF) |
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