

Frankenstein (1931)

Music Score by Grammy-Nominated
Composer Michael Shapiro Performed with
Live Orchestra

"Shapiro has a rare melodic gift."

— The New York Times

"Michael Shapiro's operatic score gives
'Frankenstein' new dimension."

— Arts Atlanta



Frankenstein Score Trailer

Watch the trailer below to experience how Shapiro's haunting score transforms this horror classic into a contemporary cinematic event. The marriage of the original film and live orchestral performance creates an unforgettable theatrical experience.



YouTube



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A Cinematic Masterpiece Transformed

Grammy-nominated composer Michael Shapiro composed a critically acclaimed, full-length score for James Whale's 1931 classic film *Frankenstein*, although a sound film, was originally released without a through-composed film score. Designed to be performed live with the film, Shapiro's music adds profound emotional depth and a contemporary resonance to the cinematic masterpiece.

To accommodate diverse performance needs, Shapiro created six distinct versions of the score: for full orchestra, chamber orchestra, wind ensemble, organ only, piano quintet, and an operatic version that powerfully uses the Latin Requiem Mass.

The Genesis

Commissioned in 2001 by The Chappaqua Orchestra's Boris Koutzen Memorial Fund, the work had its world premiere in October 2002 at the Film Society of Lincoln Center's Jacob Burns Film Center.

Global Impact

It has since been presented in over 75 sold-out productions worldwide, captivating audiences from the US and Canada to Norway, Germany, Italy and England.

Unlike its 1935 sequel, *The Bride of Frankenstein*, which features Franz Waxman's lush score, the original *Frankenstein* was produced without a composed film score. As critics like Leonard Maltin have noted, the film is badly in need of music. Shapiro's 70-minute score is precisely timed to underscore the film's dialogue, providing the haunting emotional landscape that modern audiences expect and significantly enhancing the film's dramatic power.

A Visual Journey From Screen to Stage



The fusion of iconic imagery from James Whale's 1931 masterpiece with contemporary live orchestral performances creates a unique theatrical experience. From the gothic laboratories to the torch-lit mob scenes, Shapiro's score amplifies every dramatic moment, breathing new life into Boris Karloff's legendary portrayal of the Monster.

Critical Acclaim

"Shapiro has a rare melodic gift"

— The New York Times

"Shapiro writes music that gets under a listener's skin."

— **Clifton Noble, Jr.**, Springfield, Massachusetts Republican

"The audience was riveted to their seats. The power of the live music with the classic film was hypnotic."

— **Rob Tomaro**, Cashbox Canada Magazine

"It's a classical movie but a contemporary composition, which gives it a completely different kind of emotional underpinning."

— **Marta Hepler Drahos**, Traverse City, Michigan Record-Eagle

"This unique inaugural event pairs the excitement of a classic horror movie with a symphonic score designed especially for this movie. Boris Karloff made Frankenstein world famous, and Michael Shapiro is world-renowned in the music world. What a fabulous partnership and premise for viewer pleasure. Don't miss it."

— **Roy Blackwood**, Columbia Theatre, Hammond, Louisiana

Featured Coverage

Television & Radio

- [Fox News Atlanta](#) — Opera breathes new life into horror classic
- [NPR WABE/PBS](#) — Atlanta Opera Orchestra performance
- [ABC Report](#) — LA Opera production coverage

Print & Online

- [EarRelevant](#) — Exclusive interview with Michael Shapiro

Performance Configurations

Flexible Scoring for Diverse Ensembles



Chamber Orchestra

Forces: 1,1,1,1 – 1,1,1,1 – piano/electronic keyboard with amp – timp., BD – single strings

The chamber orchestra version can be increased to theater-size orchestra by adding strings, offering flexibility for venues of varying capacities.



Full Orchestra

Forces: 2 (alt. picc.), 2,2,2 – 4,2,2,1 – piano/electronic keyboard with amp – timp., perc. (2) – strings

Percussion: Perc 1: Glockenspiel (played with mallets as well as Finger Cymbals) and Vibraphone. Perc 2: Tam Tam, Bass Drum, Suspended Cymbal, Mark Tree, Triangle



Wind Ensemble

Forces: Flute 1, Flute 2 (doubles on Piccolo), Oboe 1 & 2, Bb Clarinet 1 & 2, Bb Bass Clarinet, Bassoon 1 & 2, Alto Sax 1 & 2, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, Horn in F 1 & 2, Bb Trumpet 1&2, Trombone 1 & 2, Tuba, String Bass, Timpani, Percussion 1, Percussion 2, Piano

Operatic Version


Features five singers (soprano, contralto, tenor, baritone, and bass) with the Latin Requiem Mass as libretto, performed with either chamber orchestra or full orchestra. The chamber orchestra can be modified to add more strings while keeping single winds in place.

Piano Quintet

An intimate chamber arrangement perfect for smaller venues and special performances, capturing the score's emotional essence with reduced forces.

Organ Only

A solo organ version that harnesses the instrument's dramatic range and gothic atmosphere, ideal for cathedral performances or unique venue presentations.

 **Listen Now:** The Overture to Frankenstein, The Movie Score, performed by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (UK) conducted by Michael Shapiro, is available on Spotify at <https://open.spotify.com/track/1IPwet7C4cfXzCsPDvsDt5> and on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sm2kOzbeNuE&list=RDsm2kOzbeNuE&start_radio=1.

Technical Requirements

1. Large screen hanging stage rear
2. Orchestra on stage or in pit
3. Optional: Wireless microphone offstage right (for pre-concert announcement)
4. Projectionist: operate DVD or BluRay projector from rear hall with sufficient lens for projection
5. DVD or BluRay disc of the film
6. Optional: Sound engineer (please note that this is only recommended in movie theaters not concert halls where acoustic projection of the orchestra's sound is recommended). Sound Engineer would be for balancing film sound with orchestra as some productions mix the orchestra through the soundboard to blend the music into the film soundtrack.

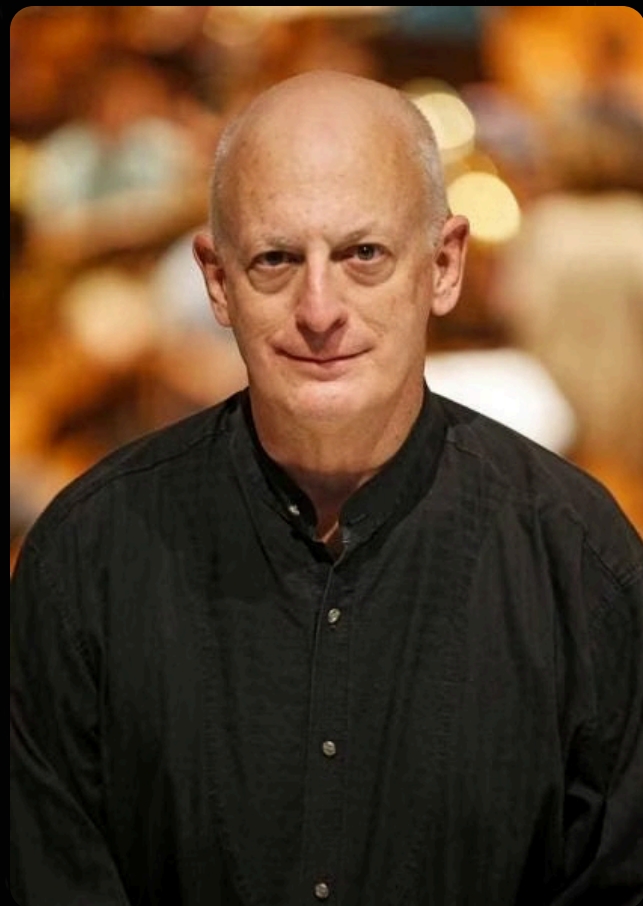
Meet the Composer

"Shapiro's music is richly Romantic, with a lyrical sweep and a sure command of orchestral color."

— The New York Times

"Under Shapiro's own baton, the orchestra delivers a performance both passionate and precise, revealing the complex architecture beneath the score's lush surface."

— Gramophone



Distinguished Career

Michael Shapiro is a critically acclaimed, **Grammy-nominated** American composer and conductor whose distinguished career spans over four decades. The Brooklyn-born musician has received numerous prestigious honors throughout his career.

His extensive catalog features over 100 works spanning opera, film, television, orchestral, and chamber music, with his compositions characterized by their lyrical, neo-romantic style and described by The New York Times as possessing a "rare melodic gift." Michael Shapiro's exclusive publisher is Universal Edition/Wien.

A particularly remarkable achievement is his original score for the 1931 classic film "Frankenstein," which has been presented in over **75 sold-out international productions**. As Laureate Conductor of The Chappaqua Orchestra and former assistant conductor at the Zurich Opera Studio, Shapiro maintains an active conducting career.

His educational background includes studies at Columbia University and The Juilliard School, where he worked with Vincent Persichetti and Renee Longy, with private composition studies under Elie Siegmeister. Shapiro's significant cultural contributions extend to his role as music consultant for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, where he produced and performed works by composers affected by the Holocaust, further solidifying his reputation as an artist of both exceptional talent and profound historical consciousness.

Further Resources

- Official website: michaelshapiro.com/
- Publisher: universaledition.com/michael-shapiro-8499

Global Performances

Shapiro's works have been performed by major ensembles worldwide including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Los Angeles Opera, Houston Symphony, and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

He has collaborated with such distinguished artists as soprano Teresa Stratas, conductor Marin Alsop, cellist Janos Starker, and actress Kim Cattrall. His music has been broadcast internationally on NPR, BBC, CBS, and other major networks.

Awards & Recognition



Grammy Nomination

Nominated as a conductor for "Best Classical Compendium" for the recording of Mythologies II, composed by Danae Xanthe Vlasse, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and various soloists.



Grants & Fellowships

He has received grants and fellowships from organizations such as the Martha Baird Rockefeller Composer's Assistance Association and the Henry Evans Traveling Fellowship of Columbia University.

📄 "Michael's score is absolutely magnificent. It provides deeper levels of emotion and a haunted feel to the film for modern audiences."

— Sara Karloff (Boris Karloff's daughter)

Booking Information

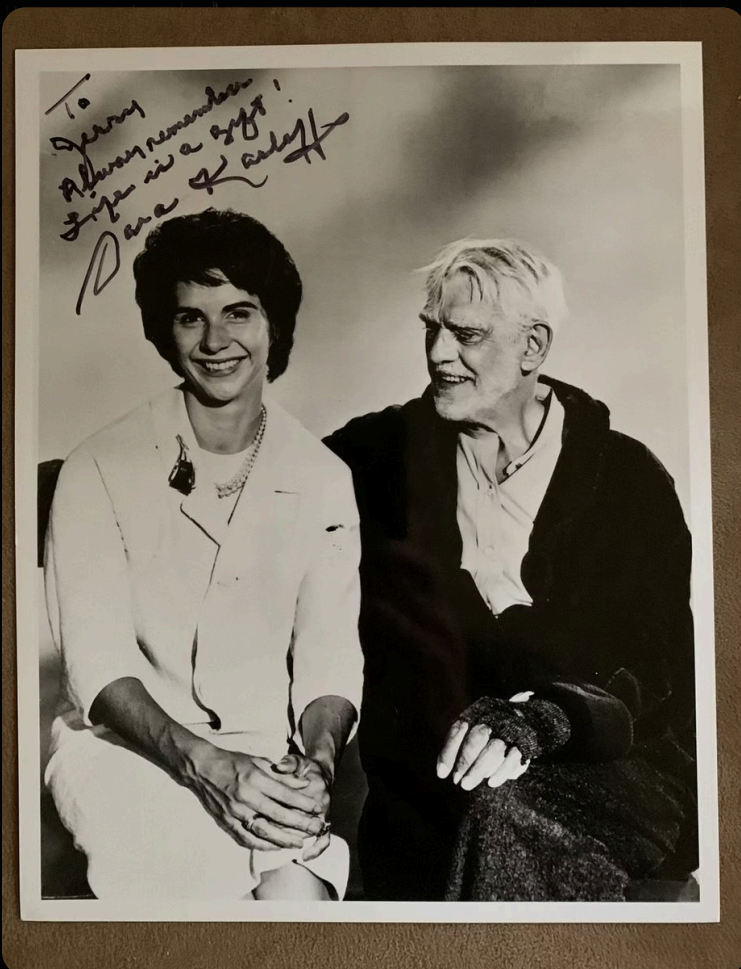
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Performance Package

Fee: Sliding scale budgeted to meet Michael Shapiro's and the presenting organization's requirements. Includes composer/conductor appearance, travel, and hotel accommodations. Michael Shapiro will conduct the performance and is available for pre-concert talks and post-performance Q&A sessions.

2



Special Guest Package

Additional Fee: Negotiable fee plus travel and accommodations. Sara Karloff, daughter of Boris Karloff, is available to join Michael Shapiro for an exclusive Q&A session, offering unique insights into her father's iconic performance and the film's enduring legacy. Her personal stories add an irreplaceable dimension to the experience, bridging cinema history with contemporary musical artistry.



Contact Information

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For booking inquiries, technical requirements, promotional materials, and additional information about bringing this extraordinary production to your venue, please contact Signature Artists. We look forward to working with you to create an unforgettable evening of film and music.