



Andrew Downing's Otterville: Live Soundtrack to **The Great Gabbo**



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2018 8:00PM
KW LITTLE THEATRE
WATERLOO, ON

PROGRAM

The Great Gabbo
Andrew Downing
Otterville

Andrew Downing – cello
Aline Homzy – violin
Tara Davidson – alto saxophone
Michael Davidson – vibraphone
Paul Mathew – bass guitar
Nick Fraser - drums



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The Great Gabbo (1929) is an early sound film musical starring the great filmmaker Erich Von Stroheim as a megalomaniac ventriloquist whose dummy 'Otto' acts as his conscience, his dining companion, his honesty with himself and the outward expression of his true emotions. Gabbo's irritability, anger, superstition and ego cause his girlfriend and assistant Mary to leave him, only to be reacquainted two years later when Mary is happily in love with and married to Frank, a singer and dancer. Mary becomes romantically confused, remembering the kindness Otto always showed her, and she rekindles Gabbo's love for her. He begins to reveal to her his loneliness and longing for her, only to find out she is married to Frank. He flies into a confused rage and is driven to madness. In the final scenes, he ruins the finale of the variety show in which he is performing and leaves the theatre in emotional tatters, fired from his job in the theatre.

The music, composed with the assistance of the Ontario Arts Council, was written by Andrew Downing for the Juno-nominated group Otterville, and takes hints of melodies from the songs in the film, in particular from little songs that Otto sings during the course of the ventriloquist act. It features some composed material, some improvised material and some accompaniment to the musical numbers in the show. A special edit of the film was created for this performance.

BIOGRAPHY

Andrew Downing is a Toronto based double bass player, cellist, composer and educator born in London, Ontario in 1973. He plays primarily in the creative jazz scene in Canada, but also performs classical chamber music, improvised music, folk and roots music, and world music. He practices the unusual craft of tuning his bass in fifths an octave lower than a cello. His teachers include

BIOGRAPHY

Jack Winn, Dave Young, Don Thompson, Shauna Rolston and Joel Quarrington.

His own projects span a wide variety of styles and practices. Most recently, he has started a 'quiet jazz' ensemble of cello, alto saxophone, lap steel guitar, vibraphone, bass and drums called **Otterville** that released its first recording in the fall of 2016, which was recently nominated for a Juno Award. It was also on the Longer List for the 2017 Polaris Music Prize. He also has a collaborative project in Istanbul, Turkey with ud (Turkish lute) player *Güç Başar Gülle* that incorporates Ottoman Classical music in a collection of new compositions for ud, cello, percussion and kaval (a Turkish folk instrument). Their first album **Anahar** was released in 2013 to critical acclaim. He also has a collaborative multi-media project with Canadian songwriter *John Southworth* and visual artist *Yesim Tosuner* called **Easterween** featuring songs written by John and arranged by Andrew for his 7-piece chamber ensemble. He also leads his chamber-jazz ensemble *Melodeon*, which plays live scores for silent films such as **The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari**, **Phantom of the Opera** (with choir), **Maciste in Hell**, **Impossible Voyage** and **The Shock**.

As a composer, Andrew has written pieces for Nordic Folk group *Ensemble Polaris*, banjo player *Jayme Stone*, *The Vancouver Bach Choir*, *Ensemble Meduse*, *Toca Loca* and *The Prince George Symphony*, and has written arrangements for *Patricia O'Callaghan*, *The Gryphon Trio*, *The Annex Quartet* and *The Art of Time Ensemble*.

He has won two Juno awards, one for his own recording **Blow The House Down** with his former group *Great Uncles of the Revolution*, and one with the Vancouver-based group *Zubot and Dawson*. He has also won two West Coast Music Awards, a Socan Award, and the Grand Prix de Jazz from the Montreal Jazz Festival.

Andrew currently teaches double bass, composition and improvisation at the University of Toronto and has taught at Wilfred Laurier University, the Banff Centre's Jazz Workshop and the Creative Music Workshop in Halifax.

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UPCOMING NUMUS EVENT: **CRIS DERKSEN**



March 2nd | 8pm
Walper Hotel Oak Room
Kitchener

Juno Nominee and Indigenous cellist/composer Cris Derksen brilliantly builds layers of sound into captivating performances. Her music braids the traditional and contemporary in multiple dimensions, weaving her traditional classical training and her Aboriginal ancestry with new school electronics, creating genre-defying music.



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