

# SOUND SPRING

A film by Catalina



Cleveland International Film Festival, 2025  
Visible Evidence XXXI  
(extended cut) Wex's Unorthodocs, 2024

With stories by

Karen McKee, Paul Graham, Elias Kelley, Rose Pelzl, Charles Arthur Williams, Shane Creepingbear,  
Anne Bohlen, Donna Denman, Jalyn Roe, Sumayah Chappelle, Rukiya Robertson & Talon Silverhorn

Cinematography by Elena Dahl

Music by Anthony Vine

Edit by Emily Packer

2025 / 78 minutes / USA / color / English with English subtitles

Contact Grasshopper Film at [grasshopperfilm.com/contact/](https://grasshopperfilm.com/contact/) for programming inquiries in North America.  
Educational purchase info [here](#). Please direct all international inquiries to [CatalinaFilm@gmail.com](mailto:CatalinaFilm@gmail.com).

## SOUND SPRING

*The Yellow Spring, the Yellow Spring*  
*The lore is that if you, the lore is, lore is, lore is lore is lore is lore is*  
*the lore is that if you*  
*drink the, drink the, drink the water*  
*drink drink drink drink the water*  
*you'll be somehow*  
*trapped, trapped trapped or bound*  
*to Yellow Springs indefinitely*  
- Shane Creepingbear



Unfolding in a series of eight vignettes, *Sound Spring* explores the history of Yellow Springs, Ohio over hundreds of years, as narrated by its residents: one interviewee rollerblades while reading the village's water meters, another stands on his head in a breakdancing freeze. The villagers recount American histories—ancestors' settlements after slavery, a friendship with Coretta Scott King, and Ohio's Trail of Tears—alongside more personal details of village life. Through re-performing their own recorded media, they uncover layers of time and storytelling.

## SOUND SPRING

### Long Synopsis

Sound Spring is an anthology documentary about Yellow Springs, a midwestern village in Ohio with a unique civil rights legacy. Its history distinguishes itself, because unlike today, when many small towns have been fractured by racism and economic disparity, members of this community have confronted inequality together. Each resident portrayed has helped create their own scene, based on an audio interview the director conducted with them.

This progressive microcosm of the country has had memorable residents ranging from Tecumseh to Coretta Scott King—it is presently the home of Dave Chappelle, whose niece features in the film. The stories of eight residents are distinct but occasionally overlap: a descendant of the Conway Colony—formerly enslaved people who were helped to settle here by the abolitionist son of their slaver—and the daughter of Yellow Springs' first black police chief, who handled the village's largest protest when the white barber refused to cut black hair; a sixth generation student of Antioch College, whose enrollment is now decimated; a breakdancer and his DJ collaborator, playing on the steps of their old abandoned student union; a well-known film producer and former professor of the College who lost her job when the College closed and was not rehired when it reopened; a lifelong advocate for affordable housing; and a woman who recounts her mother's friendship with Coretta Scott King, who studied at Antioch College but eventually transferred after struggling to carry out her internships because of racism in the village. Many speak of the village's social justice struggles, and throughout the film, themes of home and the desire for belonging resonate. In the epilogue, a Shawnee descendant of "Blue Jacket", who grew up in Oklahoma, narrates stories of Tecumseh and forced removal.

The interviewees are not telling their stories for the first time—rather, most are lip-syncing recordings of their own previous interviews. Some interviewees are better at the performance than others; both the mistakes and uncertainty of these initial recordings, as well as occasional errors in re-performing, bring attention to the delicacy of preserving a story over time. Some of the glitches and repeats seem like exuberant play—as a DJ scratches a record, the film uses source material as an opportunity for remixes. At times the interview recording is audible from a loudspeaker within the room: as the performer harmonizes with its tinny sound, the diegetic potential of the voice complexifies. Many of the physical activities the characters take on are not usually associated with interviewing: roller skating, exercising, even standing on their heads. *Sound Spring* renegotiates reality, questions public memory and accepts inaccuracies in each person's point of view. Not until one of the final vignettes is there a talking-head style interview—but here, the voice of the interviewee is clearly older than the young girls performing the visual scene, suggesting a passing down of stories through generations and solidarity between the women. The actors' lip-sync looks almost perfect—only subtle hints remind us that every story told comprises various layers of time.

## SOUND SPRING

### Bios

**Catalina Alvarez** (director & producer) makes choreographed films and experimental musicals. Her debut feature length film, *Sound Spring*, is distributed in North America by Grasshopper Film. Her short films have screened at festivals including Slamdance, Fantastic Fest, New Orleans and Palm Springs, and venues such as the ICA Philadelphia, the San Diego Art Institute and the Museum of the Moving Image. She is a recipient of fellowships and residencies from the Flaherty Seminar, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Rooftop Films, Flux Factory and the Wexner Center for the Arts. Catalina grew up in a bilingual (Spanish and English) household. She currently teaches in the Visual Arts program at Fordham University, where she is head of Art & Engagement.

**Sumayah Chappelle** (actor & on-site director of Talon Silverhorn scenes) is from Yellow Springs, Ohio. Her acting work includes the short film, "Painted Lady" (2013), for which she won Best Actor at the Atlanta Film Festival, as well as "Wren" (2015) and "Royal" (2020). Chappelle's most recent body of work includes an exhibition of video and ceramic sculptures at Chrome, YS Architectural Office in Yellow Springs, Ohio, which brings attention to the genocide taking place in Gaza, the Congo, Sudan, etc. and captures Chappelle's personal journey towards Islam. Chappelle is currently pursuing a degree in Religious Studies Degree at Whittier College in Whittier, California.

**Anthony Vine** (composer) is the recipient of the 2024 Rome Prize in Musical Composition at the American Academy in Rome. In 2016, he received the Gaudeamus International Composers Award, where the jury noted, "Anthony Vine creates a solid, mature, beautifully crafted fragile sound world. He knows how to blur the identity of the different sources of sounds including the use of electronics in a very singular way." Other honors include fellowships from the Watermill Center and Camargo Foundation, EtM Con Edison Composer-in-Residence, John J. Cali String Quartet Composition Award, Salvatore Martirano Memorial Composition Award, and funding from the Jerome Foundation, New Music USA, NYSCA, and Johnstone Fund for New Music.

**Elena Dahl** (DP & co-producer) works with physically and digitally manipulated photographs, text and film to make queer historical revisions and speculative fictions. Approaching photography as a phenomenon through which the world discloses itself to us, they treat the medium as a marvelous process that can open up portals of liberation in the here and now. She received her MFA in Photography from the University of Florida, and is Associate Professor of Art at Wittenberg University in Springfield, OH.

**Emily Packer** (Editor) is an experimental filmmaker and editor with an interest in geography, hybrid formats, and collaborative practices. Their debut directorial feature "Holding Back the Tide" is an impressionist hybrid documentary that traces the oyster as a queer icon through its many life cycles in New York. Her editorial experience spans indie narrative, experimental nonfiction, historical arthouse fiction, and personal essay film. Emily was a fellow in the 2018 Collaborative Studio at UnionDocs in Brooklyn, a current member of the Meerkat Media Collective, and a proud alumna of the anomalous Hampshire College. Emily collects voicemails for future use; consider yourself notified.

## SOUND SPRING

### Complete Credits

Interviewees: Karen McKee, Paul Graham, Rose Pelzl, Charles Arthur Williams, Shane Creepingbear, Anne Bohlen, Donna Denman, Jalyn Roe & Talon Silverhorn

Performers: Karen McKee, Elias Kelley, Rose Pelzl, Charles Arthur Williams, Shane Creepingbear, Anne Bohlen, Donna Denman, Sumayah Chappelle, Rukiya Robertson & Talon Silverhorn

Writer, Director, & Producer: Catalina Alvarez

Executive Producer: Matthew Morgan

Co-Executive Producer and Co-Writer: Jeanne Kay

Co-Producers: Elena Dahl, Daniel Fishkin & Shawndra Jones

Director of Photography: Elena Dahl

Editor: Emily Packer

Composer: Anthony Vine

Sound Designer & Re-recording Mixer: Mike Kennedy

Production Sound: Shawndra Jones & Matthew Morgan

On-site Director of Talon Silverhorn scenes: Sumayah Chappelle

Yellow Spring close-up cinematography from an earlier project by: Elena Dahl

Assistant Camera & Camera Operator: Omar Cervantes

Assistant Editors: Ben Still & Ty Clapsaddle

Additional Editing Assistance: Lola Betz & Michael Perea

Production Assistants: Zoë Ritzhaupt (& assistant camera), Terry Park,

Rose Compton, Lola Betz, Matt Duncan (assistant sound), Michael

Perea, Alyssa Navarrette

Colorist: Jason Crump

Titles & Graphic Design by: Program & Saki Sato

DCP Author: Lucas C. Ospina

Soundtrack available on Kuyin

### Made possible by support from:

Wexner Center for the Arts Film/Video Studio Program

Rooftop Films and NYCEDC Production Office Grant

Virginia Center for the Creative Arts Fellowship

The Johnstone Fund for New Music

The Yellow Springs Community Foundation

Antioch College

Fordham University

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## SOUND SPRING

### Director's Statement

I had recently moved to Yellow Springs to teach at Antioch College and I wanted to get to know the villagers. I had been doing talk therapy, psychoanalysis (my own)—this time I wanted to be the listener. Neenah Ellis, a local NPR producer, taught me how to give my full attention as a listener: don't fidget or write, always make eye contact. I interviewed 12 residents who I found through one connection or another. They told me important (and some less "important") histories, through their own remembering, however unsure. Later we staged visual scenes with this original audio.

I like the way people talk. The honest voice makes good aesthetic material:

Karen McKee; Paul Graham; Ellias Kelley; Rose Pelzl; Charles Arthur Williams; Shane Creepingbear; Anne Bohlen; Donna Denman; Jalyn Roe; Sumayah Chappelle; Rukiya Robertson; & Talon Silverhorn—the clear sound of their voices, close in your ear,

like god whispering to you.

At the end of the film, a voice whose body we've seen. Talon Silverhorn is nowhere to be seen, haunting around the film frame, not within it, instead behind, beside (in only the way that sound, and not vision, can be). This is a film of layers and ghosts.

The recording is left.

### Composer's Statement

In *Sound Spring*, Catalina Alvarez explores the sources and casualties of sound and speech. Characters lip-sync or speak alongside recorded versions of their stories. Some mouth the speech of other people. Some speak over playback of their own voices. Some lip-sync to loops of themselves speaking. These doublings are uncanny and, as Catalina notes, poetic: "both the mistakes and uncertainty of these initial recordings, as well as errors in re-performing, bring attention to the delicacy of preserving a story over time."

The score to *Sound Spring* doubles this doubling. Like the actors, musicians are asked to trace and imitate sounds, but of the environment, not speech. The sounds of water, traffic, wind, machines, and civilization from the film are their prompts. Musicians tune to the spectra of a spring, harmonize with operant sounds of a projector, imitate the whittling of wood. It is a sort of tuning, an alignment of one's sound with another, a fusion where the sources cannot be distinguished. Recordings of these exercises are not ends-in-themselves; they will be overlaid, raw and unaltered, with audio from the film to create several pieces of musique concrète that will play at junctures between the film's "sequences."

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## Excerpts from the soundtrack score

Rose  
by Anthony Vine  
Maya Bernardo, violin  
Daniel Fishkin, saxophone  
Will Lang, trombone  
Ryan Packard, percussion  
Anthony Vine, electric guitar

### Performance and Recording Notes

Play the provided audio recordings on *speakers*, not headphones.

Many of the exercises ask you to play alongside the recording (sounding from speakers in the room) and to continue to play after the recording has ended. The result will be a split recording: half with your playing and pre-recorded audio, the other half with just your playing alone.

To record, you only need a simple portable recording device, like a Zoom. Feel free to use more elaborate recording setups if you prefer. Place the recording device relatively close to your instrument to record your sound at the highest possible level without clipping and to capture the details of your playing.

What do I mean by "fuse with the recording?" The concept is based, in part, on one of Pauline Oliveros's *Sonic Meditations, XVII: Ear ly*, which asks participants to "enhance or paraphrase the auditory environment so perfectly that a listener cannot distinguish between the real sound of the environment and the performed sounds." It is also based on my experiences tuning intervals in just intonation. When partials are painstakingly aligned, especially over long periods of time, I have felt a trance-like interconnectedness, where the 'identities' of the instruments dissolve into a sourceless composite.

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## Excerpts from the soundtrack score

### 1. Rose



Listen to rose.aif.

#### Maya

Listen to the birds in rose.aif and find a tone within their songs. (I hear a high F and A.)

While listening to rose.aif on loop, play this tone on the violin continuously, tuning the pitch, dynamics, and timbre until your playing fuses with the recording.

Record: play your tone while listening to rose.aif, continuing for a minute or so after the recording ends.

#### Will

Listen to the faint hum in rose\_will.aif.

While listening to rose\_will.aif on loop, play a sonority that matches the hum (F 185 hz), tuning the pitch, dynamics, and timbre (try different mutes) until your playing fuses with the recording.

Record: play your sonority while listening to rose\_will.aif, continuing for a minute or so after the recording ends.

#### Ryan

Throughout the film, Rose lifts metal plates to inspect water meters. You can hear their clatter in rose.aif.

Using rose.ryan.aif as a reference, find metals that match the sound of Rose's plates (e.g. brake drum, almglocken, bell plate).

While listening to rose.aif on loop, continuously bow, brush, or rub one or more metals, adjusting until the texture fuses with the recording.

Record: play the metallic texture while listening to rose.aif, continuing for a minute or so after the recording ends.

#### Daniel

While listening to rose.aif on loop, and imitate and echo the sounds of the recording on the daxophone.

Do this until you feel you can improvise sounds that are indistinguishable from the sounds on the recording.

Record: improvise in this way while listening to rose.aif, continuing for a minute or so after the recording ends.

## SOUND SPRING

### Links & press about the feature film:

“[the audit] Catalina Jordan Alvarez: Sound Spring”

<https://www.mackhagood.com/phantom-power-news-november-2025/>

“‘Sound Spring’ Review: A Love Letter to a Small Town”

<https://cinemacy.com/sound-spring-review/>

“‘Sound Spring’ Review:

A Wonderful Documentary Time Capsule of Yellow Springs, Ohio”

<https://www.filmfocusonline.com/post/sound-spring-review>

“Interview: Sound Spring Director Catalina Jordan Alvarez  
On Ohio, Experimental Filmmaking, & More”

<https://fugitives.com/interview-sound-spring-catalina-jordan-alvarez-2025/>

“Creating images from audio: Catalina Alvarez’s ‘Sound Spring’”

<https://www.wdtn.com/news/local-news/creating-images-from-audio-catalina-alvarezs-sound-spring/>

“Yellow Springs documentary to debut at long-running festival”

<https://www.wdtn.com/entertainment/movies/yellow-springs-documentary-to-debut-at-long-running-festival/?ipid=promo-link-block1>

“‘Sound Spring’: A Historic Impressionistic Documentary”

<https://theephamoliver.medium.com/sound-spring-a-historic-impressionistic-documentary-146fff9d8eb0>

“7 Ohio Movies To See at the Cleveland International Film Festival”

<https://clevelandmagazine.com/entertainment/film-tv/articles/7-ohio-movies-to-see-at-the-2025-cleveland-international-film-festival>

Cleveland International Film Festival Spotlight Films Revealed:

<https://www.clevelandfilm.org/news/the-best-in-independent-film-at-ciff49-cleveland-international-film-festival-reveals-2025-s-spotlight-films>

*Sound Spring* is participating in the Visions du Reel Market April 4-July 13, 2025

<https://www.visionsdureel.ch/en/vdr-industry/vdr-film-market/>

Premiere of extended cut at Unorthodocs, Wexner Center for the Arts:

<https://wexarts.org/film-video/sound-spring>

Dayton Daily News article:

<https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-1-d&q=dayton+daily+sound+spring>

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### Links & press about the soundtrack:

Soundtrack available on Kuyin

<https://www.kuyinlabel.com/>

Soundtrack review “A Closer Listen”

<https://acloserlisten.com/2024/09/14/anthony-vine-sound-spring/>

Soundtrack Review “Cookylamoo”

<https://www.cookylamoo.com/boringlikeadrill/tag/vine-anthony>

Soundtrack Concert at Short North Stage on October 8, 2024

<https://www.experiencecolumbus.com/event/anthony-vine%3A-%E2%80%9Csound-spring%E2%80%9D/84620/>

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### Press from chapters released as stand-alone shorts:

Hyperallergic

<https://hyperallergic.com/548978/tired-of-netflix-stream-experimental-films-and-video-art/>

Sound Spring Seq. #6 at ICA Philadelphia

<https://icaphila.org/events/ovc-2020-sound-spring-seq-6-the-school-and-the-home/>

Interview with Lino Kino after release of Seq. #6

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AvMq8ow\\_zc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AvMq8ow_zc)

Bushwick Daily

<https://bushwickdaily.com/arts-culture/uniondocs-center-ridgewood-crystal-campbell-catalina-alvarez/>

Wexner Center for the Arts

<https://wexarts.org/press-release/wexner-center-arts-celebrates-25th-anniversary-ohio-shorts>

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## SOUND SPRING

### Resources on the History of Yellow Springs, Ohio

#### The 365 Project

<https://www.the365projectys.org/>

*A volunteer group of local professionals, educators, parents & youth promoting diverse African-American heritage, Black culture, and racial equity 365 days a year.*

#### The James A McKee Association

<https://yscf.org/james-a-mckee-association/>

*Their organizational purpose, as stated in their by-laws, is to carry out research and education. The three primary areas of interest have been support of public information, education and participatory democracy.*

#### Great Council State Park

<https://ohiodnr.gov/go-and-do/plan-a-visit/find-a-property/great-council-state-park>

*Found on the site of the Shawnee village of Old Chillicothe, Great Council State Park celebrates and honors the history of the Native Americans and European settlers of the region.*

#### Antiochiana

<https://antiochcollege.edu/academics/olive-kettering-library/antiochiana/>

*The archives and special collections of Antioch College*

#### The Ohio Country

<https://www.wyso.org/podcast/the-ohio-country>

*A 12-episode podcast from the public media station WYSO about American Indian people reconnecting with their homelands in the Ohio River Valley.*