

# PICTURE

ICABELLA  
ROSSELLINI  
PRESENTS

a film by  
*Paolo Cherchi Usai*

*Alloy*  
BASED ON  
ORIGINAL  
MUSIC BY  
THE ORCHESTRA

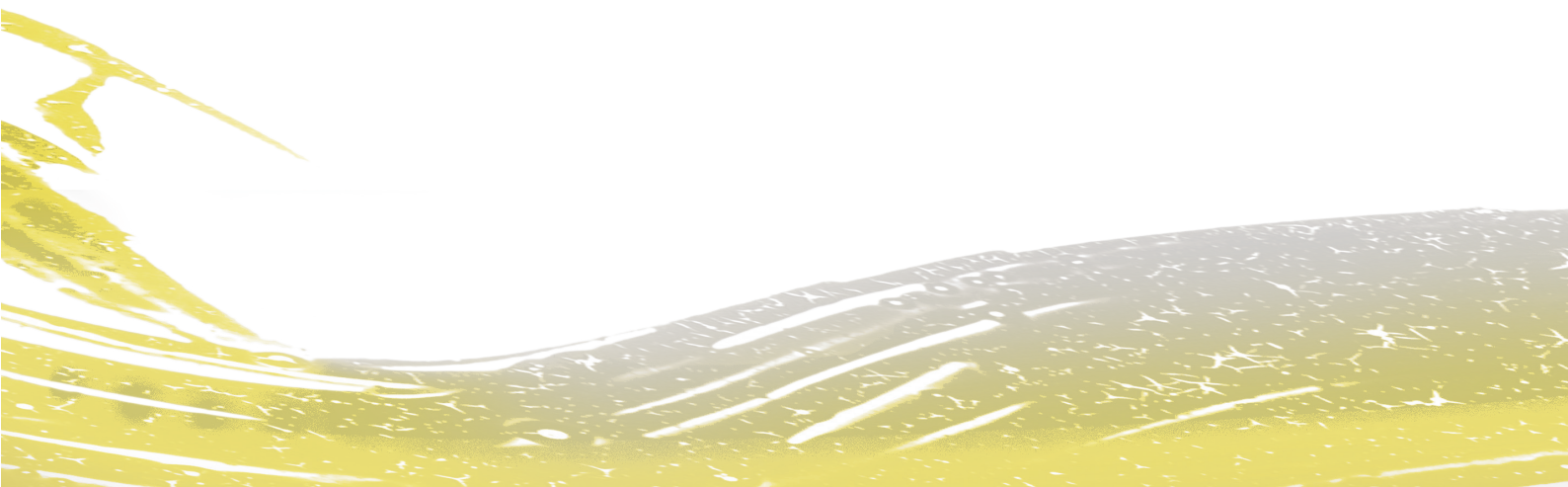
a Cinema Arts  
Production



Director of Photography **Ian Jones, A.C.S.** | Editor **Lauren Alberque**  
Produced by **Janice E. Allen** and **Michael Kolvek**  
Executive Producer **Livio Jacob**  
Calligraphy and handcoloring **Brody Neuschwander**  
Original music by **Terry Donahue, Roger Miller** and **Ken Winokur**  
Written and directed by **Paolo Cherchi Usai**

© MMXV All rights reserved

La Cineteca  
del Friuli



## PICTURE: AN INTRODUCTION

It is a film like no other you have seen. Made in violation of every rule of film production, *Picture* is a movie-in-denial, a film that tests – protests – its own identity as a film. The canned theater; a dream factory; a work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction – intuitions like that are being thrown at the film medium since birth. The Tin Man has no heart, generations of wizards have been telling us. *Picture* was made as if Paolo Cherchi Usai, its maker, had been blissfully unaware of their curse.

The way Cherchi Usai's film was made is better described as a pilgrimage than as a film production. *Picture* was made in four surprising steps across a number of media and oceans. In its beginning was a chart, a curve, a diagram, a drawing. This curve (ink on paper, with color codes), which showed the picture's future rhythm (percussions only, in one-beat-per-second tempo), was sent to the Alloy Orchestra to be converted into music. The second step – and stop – is arguably the strangest thing that ever happened to music. Rather than being performed live (as it is meant to be with the completed work), the music the Alloy trio composed after Paolo Cherchi Usai's drawing was audio-recorded and dispatched from the Western/Northern to Eastern/Southern hemisphere to be revived by another – a fourth – musician, a woman drummer of Tasmania. She played along with the Alloy music all alone, multiple times for over an hour, in the middle of the Tasmanian wilderness to no eyes or ears other than the kino-eye of a camera.

The full story of *Picture*'s progress is not just to Tasmania and back. Before homecoming, the film needed to take another tour, this time to Bruges, where a famous calligrapher – Peter Greenaway's longtime collaborator Brody Neuenschwander – performed on it the strangest thing that can happen to either calligraphy or cinema. Films, as is well known, are long strips of celluloid made to carry images, not hand-written signs. The rare people who are allowed to write on films are white-gloved negative editors, but they do this secretly, using invisible liminal spaces between frames. What Cherchi Usai made the draughtsman from Bruges perform is closer to choreography than it is to calligraphy. Two large rolls of 35mm blank film stock (one transparent, the other one with alternating 24-frames-long sections of black and white) were painted upon as the audio recording of the Alloy Orchestra music was playing to full volume. The calligrapher's pen was dancing madly to the music, leaving on celluloid letterings as beautiful as they are indecipherable. Go figure.

Figures will help. Can we test harmony by algebra, Sergei Eisenstein's favorite poet wrote in 1830. The poet, Aleksandr Pushkin, asked this about Antonio Salieri. Yes we can, wrote Eisenstein one hundred years later. And you can hear simple math behind the complex harmony of *Picture*. Count along as you watch. Look out for various multiples of four: one human with a drum, one hand with a pen, one clockwork mechanism and one image of the sea; or the four things you can do with celluloid – play for it, write on it, watch secret signals it sends to the projectionist, or just observe celluloid as a thing-in-itself. Behold this math moving, playing, and dancing in images and beats.

Pilgrimages are made to be difficult. An easy pilgrimage is a contradiction in terms. The ultimate destination of the pilgrim's progress is sweat and blood. Counting can generate everything, from square harmony to wild ecstasy. *Picture* is an endurance test—for the calligrapher not used to sprouting lines of beauty on a strip of celluloid (drips of his fingers' blood are inadvertently mixed to the ink in the final sequence); for the drummers, beating the pulse of life in the hot heart of a desert or in the dark of an auditorium; it makes us work as viewers too, and pays us in the end.

Daria Khitrova, Harvard University  
Yuri Tsivian, University of Chicago

## BIOGRAPHIES

### Paolo Cherchi Usai

Paolo Cherchi Usai is Senior Curator of the Moving Image Department at George Eastman House in Rochester, NY, is Adjunct Professor of Film at the University of Rochester, Resident Curator at the Telluride Film Festival, and Curator Emeritus of the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia. He co-founded the Giornate del Cinema Muto in Pordenone and the L. Jeffrey Selznick School of Film Preservation, of which he is currently Director.

He is the author of the experimental feature film *Passio* (2007), adapted from his book *The Death of Cinema: History, Cultural Memory, and the Digital Dark Age* (2001). Among his other published works are *Silent Cinema: An Introduction* (2000), *David Wark Griffith* (2008), *Film Curatorship: Archives, Museums, and the Digital Marketplace* (2008), “The Lindgren Manifesto” (2010), and *A History of Cinema in 1,000 Words* (2012).

He was the recipient in 2005 of the College Art Association/Heritage Preservation Joint Award for Distinction in Scholarship and Conservation from the College Art Association and Heritage Preservation.

### The Alloy Orchestra

The Alloy Orchestra is a three man musical ensemble, writing and performing live accompaniment to classic silent films. Working with an outrageous assemblage of peculiar objects, they thrash and grind soulful music from unlikely sources.

Performing at prestigious film festivals and cultural centers in the US and abroad (The San Francisco Silent Film Festival, The Telluride Film Festival, The Louvre, Lincoln Center, The Academy of Motion Pictures, the National Gallery of Art and others), Alloy has helped revive some of the great masterpieces of the silent era.

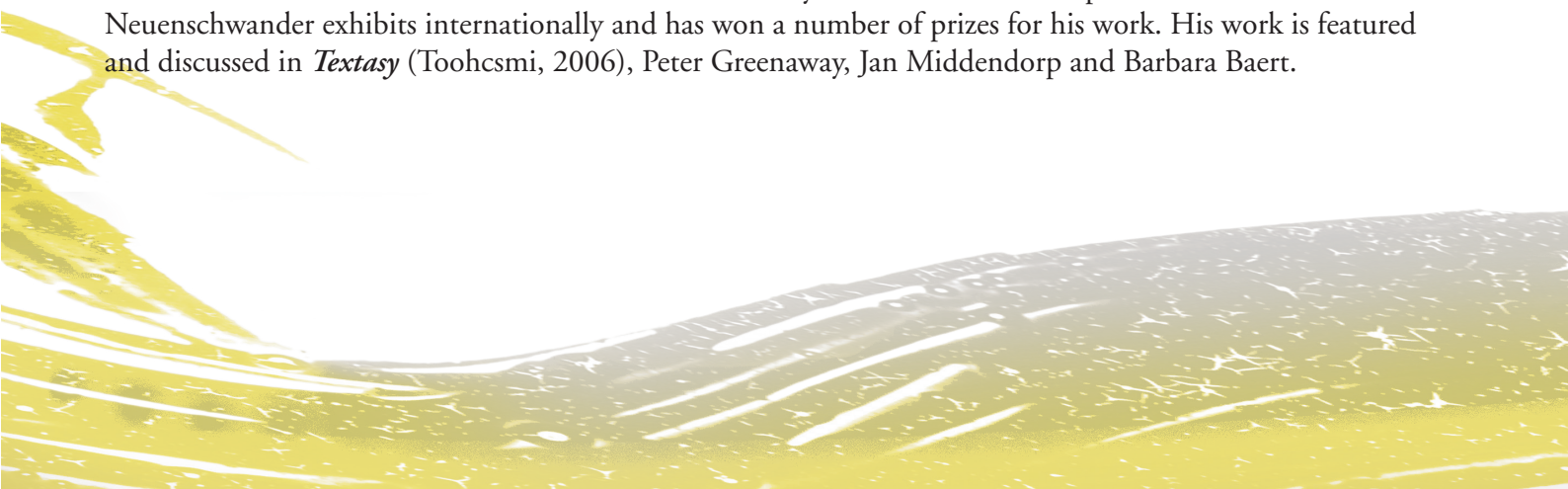
An unusual combination of found percussion and state-of-the-art electronics gives the Orchestra the ability to create any sound imaginable. Utilizing their famous “rack of junk” and electronic synthesizers, the group generates beautiful music in a spectacular variety of styles. They can conjure up a French symphony or a simple German bar band of the 20’s. The group can make the audience think it is being attacked by tigers, contacted by radio signals from Mars or swept up in the Russian Revolution.

“The best in the world at accompanying silent films.” Roger Ebert

### Brody Neuenschwander

Brody Neuenschwander is a calligrapher and text artist working in a variety of media, including canvas, collage, installations, film, video and performance pieces. Neuenschwander studied art history at Princeton University and then completed his doctorate at the Courtauld Institute in London in 1986. He simultaneously studied calligraphy and typography at the Roehampton Institute in London and went on to a career in those fields.

He has worked with film director Peter Greenaway on numerous films, operas and installations. Neuenschwander exhibits internationally and has won a number of prizes for his work. His work is featured and discussed in *Textasy* (Toohcsmi, 2006), Peter Greenaway, Jan Middendorp and Barbara Baert.



## ABOUT THE FILM

In early 2010 I commissioned the Alloy Orchestra an original score for percussion ensemble, based on a musical setting I had drawn on a 3-foot long sheet of squared notebook paper. Its operating principle was a fixed tempo – 60 beats per minute – to be strictly followed by the musicians throughout the piece. Within this grid, the performers were given complete freedom to determine the timbre, the volume and the sequence of themes to be chosen for their work.

Two artists – a drummer and a draughtsman – listened to the recording of the music without any knowledge of the instructions provided for its creation. Unbeknownst to each other, both were given the task of playing along with their respective instruments—one with a drum in front of a camera, the other with pen, brushes, ink and colored pigments on 35mm film strips. Neither of them was given time to prepare or rehearse beforehand.

The footage was assembled and edited in strict adherence to the criteria adopted for the music. I then asked the Alloy Orchestra to accompany the film with their own score, thus confronting the band with the challenge of interpreting the responses of the drummer and the draughtsman to the recorded piece. This coexistence of extreme discipline and total improvisation is at the core of the project—a generative process where a self-imposed rule is refracted in a potentially infinite set of variations, like in a hall of mirrors.

Paolo Cherchi Usai

# THE CREDITS

Isabella Rossellini Presents

A Cinema Arts Production

A Film by  
Paolo Cherchi Usai

Based on Original Music by  
The Alloy Orchestra

Director of Photography  
Ian Jones, A.C.S.

Handcoloring and Calligraphy  
Brody Neuenschwander

Editor  
Lauren Alberque

Produced By  
Janice E. Allen  
Michael Kolvek

Executive Producer  
Livio Jacob

Written and Directed by  
Paolo Cherchi Usai

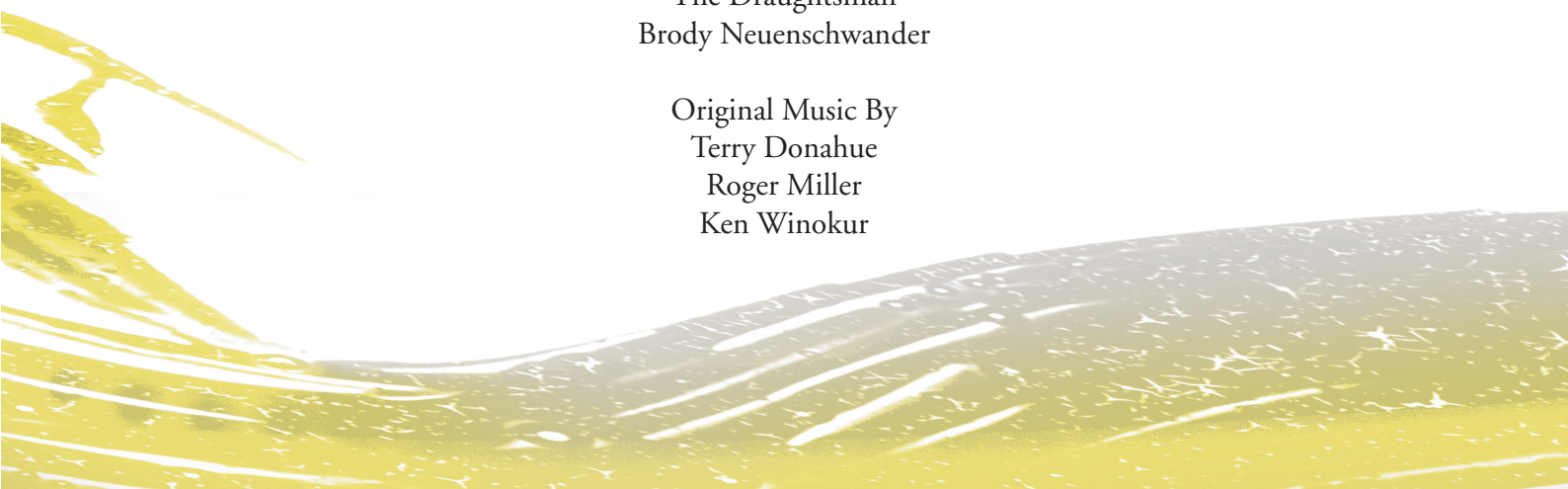
## Cast of characters

The Drummer  
Carmen Louise Tibuliac

The Metronome Player  
Eliza B. Kozlowski

The Draughtsman  
Brody Neuenschwander

Original Music By  
Terry Donahue  
Roger Miller  
Ken Winokur



Assistant Calligraphers  
John Decoene  
Peter Jonckheere

Master Positive Cutting  
Carole Fodor  
Almudena Escobar López

Film Processing  
Michael Kolvek  
Janice E. Allen

Digital Intermediate  
Kyle J. Alvut

Production Assistants  
Rolf De Heer  
Matilde Nosei  
Molly Reynolds

Still Photographer  
Renata Gorgani

The Making of Picture  
Igor Debaecke

Poster Design  
Giulio Calderini  
Carmen Marchese

Made on Location in  
Surveyors Bay, Tasmania  
Bruges, Belgium  
Ustica, Italy  
Rochester, New York

© MMXV Paolo Cherchi Usai  
All Rights Reserved

## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

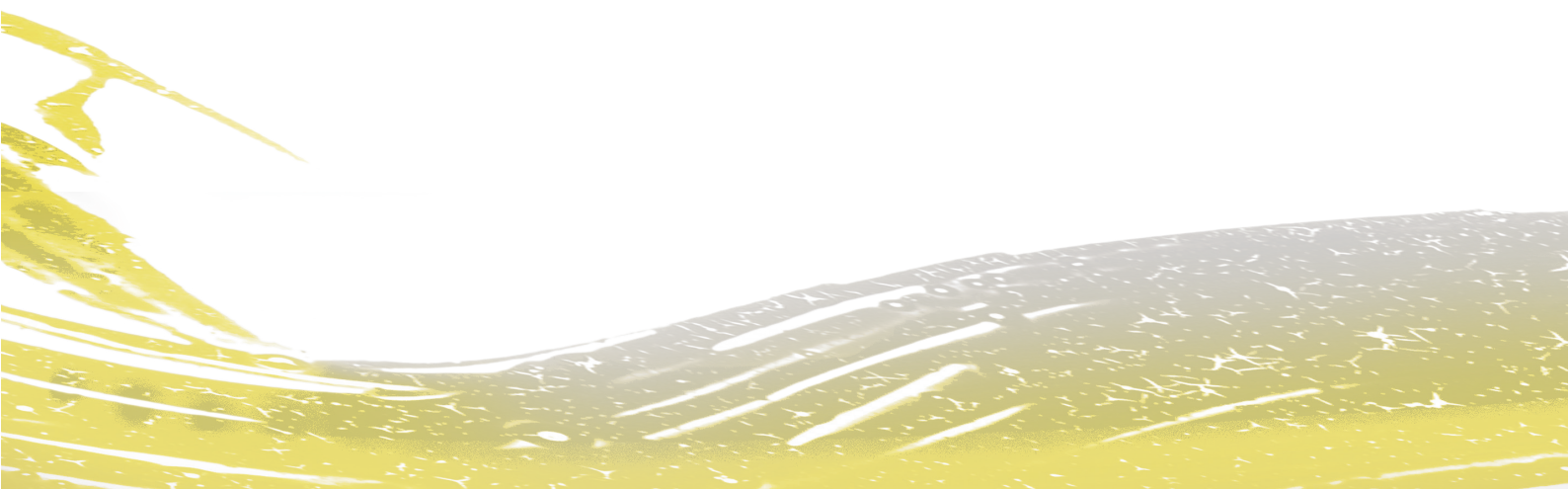
*Formats:* 35mm, silent, black & white/color/handcoloring (also available in DCP format)

*Length (35mm):* 6,120 ft. (1,865.4 metres), six single reels merged into three doubles

*Running time:* 68 minutes

*Aspect ratio:* 1:1.66

*Projection speed:* 24 fps





# TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE LIVE MUSIC PERFORMANCE OF *PICTURE*

## *Contact:*

Ken Winokur  
613 Cambridge St.  
Cambridge MA 02141  
[alloyo@verizon.net](mailto:alloyo@verizon.net)  
[alloyorchestra.com](http://alloyorchestra.com)  
Tel.: +1 617 497-6508



## Staging

The Alloy Orchestra's setup is unusually large. Typically the musicians are set up on the stage, angled from the edge of the projected film, toward the front corner of the stage (nearest the audience). If there isn't room on the stage, the musicians can be set up in an orchestra pit, or in the aisle at the front corner of the audience.

The musicians can set up either stage left or right. They should be able to see the screen from their instruments, even if at a very oblique angle. If the Orchestra cannot see the screen from where the instruments are set up, video monitors are required to display the projected film image.

Dimensions of Percussion Rack (without synth):

12 ft. long
6.5 ft. high
6 ft. deep

The Synth player (one person sitting at a single synthesizer) needs to be somewhere near the percussion, either on stage or just off it.

## Musical equipment rental

### Drum set:

(1) Bass drum. 24” – 26” inch Bass drum with (2) complete heads (no holes - no dampeners).

This drum should sound like an orchestral bass drum—ringy. Preferred heads are: Ebony Pinstripe top, Emperor bottom.

Not acceptable: Remo Powerstroke heads or similar dead heads.

If smaller drum is all that is available (22” is the smallest acceptable), a deep drum is preferable (18” or 20” deep).

Other acceptable heads – Pinstripe, Renaissance, Legacy. Thinner heads, such as the standard white coated Ambassador heads are not a good substitute.

(1) Snare drum. Wood snare drums preferred, 6.5 “ if possible. Remo Coated Ambassador top head is preferred.

(2) Tom Toms. Rack Tom Toms must mount on a freestanding tripod stand. Large drums are best (14 & 15 in). Preferred heads: Ebony Pin stripe top, uncoated Emperor bottom.

(1) Floor Tom. 18 inches preferred (16” is acceptable). Two heads, Ebony Pinstripe top, uncoated Emperor bottom.

(3) straight cymbal stands.

(1) Snare drum stand.

(1) Adjustable height drum stool.

### Miscellaneous Equipment

(1) Synthesizer stand (adjustable height);

(3) Music stands with clamp lights. They must be sturdy.

### **Alloy Orchestra Sound System Specifications**

Alloy Orchestra is typically done with modest size sound systems, typically 10 – 12 inputs.

The sound system should be capable of moderately loud volumes with full bass, like the volume of a typical movie screening, or jazz concert. This can usually be done with a moderate sized and powered system. A single pair of 15-inch main speakers is sufficient for a small room. Several times that size is recommended for larger halls.

Monitors are important! Three good monitor speakers are required with 1, 2 or 3 sends. Typical 12' floor monitors are ideal.

Volume: The volume of our concerts can easily get to be too loud. The engineer should try to match the volume of the mains to mix with the acoustic instruments and not be painfully loud.

Mains: Stereo if possible.

Monitors: (3) floor monitors – 12 inches woofers preferred. On 1 – 3 sends.

(2 -5) Direct Boxes for Synth, spring reverb (used on stage) and CD player (also controlled from stage).

Microphones: 8 – 10 microphones are needed.

Stands: Booms are best on most microphones. A medium sized stand is best for bass drum. A few short stands are useful for musical saw, and metal pans.

## HOW TO MIC THE ALLOY ORCHESTRA

Suggested: 8 microphones and 5 DI's (or less depending on show)

(2) Direct inputs from synth

(1) direct input for spring reverb effect

(1) Clarinet

(1) Accordion

(1) Musical Saw

### Percussion

(2) overheads spread out along the outside of the rack

(1) Bass Drum

(1) Tom Tom (micing 3 drums)

(1) Pans

## PROJECTION

Many Alloy Orchestra performances use 35mm prints. For best projection, the proper lens and aperture plate combination should be matched to the particular film being screened.

Please do not splice films unless absolutely necessary! If splices are necessary, never cut into the frames with an image. Always splice in the blank frames.

## LIGHTING

Each music stand will have a small light (which we will bring). Since we don't want to spill light on the film projection, very little extra light should be added. When possible 2 or 3 dim spotlights illuminating the Orchestra can be used to make the Orchestra more visible to the audience. Spotlights are not required - the stand lights are sufficient for the orchestra's needs.

## TRANSPORTATION

Because of the large amount of equipment Alloy carries, when the presenter is providing transportation it will need to be either a van or a truck. Typically, if Alloy is moving all equipment (including drum set), a full size van with at least 2 seats removed is required. If Alloy is only moving the basic equipment (with no drums) a large mini van is acceptable (Dodge Grand Caravan is recommended because of the “Stow and Go” seating). It is also possible to move Alloy and their equipment in two vehicles – one ordinary Minivan or SUV, and another passenger vehicle

Please check with Alloy about details of exactly what is being transported and what vehicles will be required.

## EQUIPMENT STORAGE

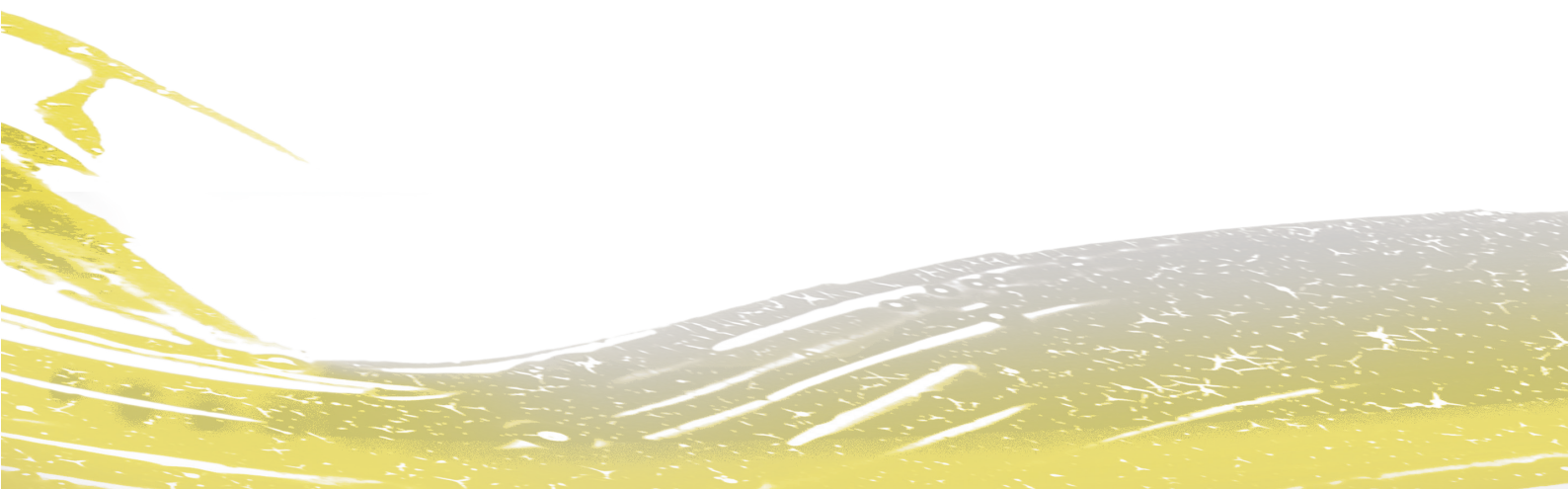
When traveling, Alloy will require storage for their equipment from the time of arrival until the time of departure. It is the responsibility of the presenter to facilitate this storage.

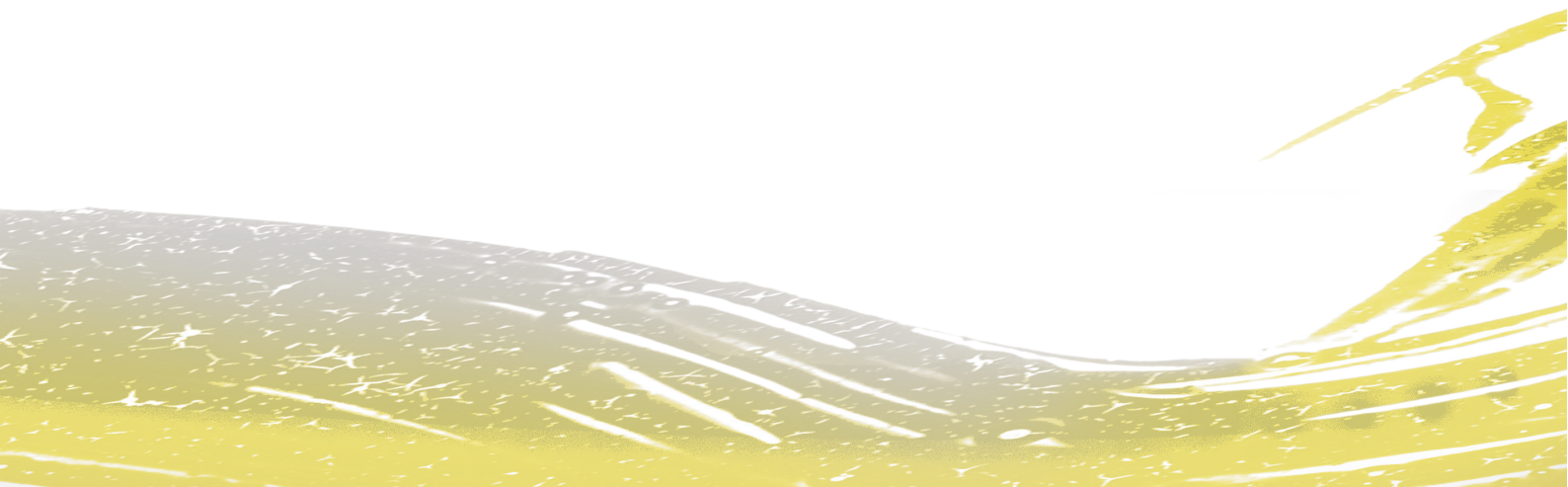
Preferably, the equipment will be stored upon arrival at the Theater where we will be performing, The same is usually true after the performance, until departure.

The goal is to minimize the moving of equipment. It is possible, in many cases, for Alloy to store equipment in their hotel rooms. but this generally requires moving the equipment at least one or two extra times for every performance, and is not preferable. When storing at a hotel, the access should be free of stairs (with either an elevator or first floor access).

Whenever possible, it is preferable to avoid carrying the equipment up and down stairs.

If the equipment is being stored at the theater after the show, Alloy will require entrance to the theater to retrieve the equipment when departing that town (often fairly early in the morning).





*Contact:*

Ken Winokur  
613 Cambridge St.  
Cambridge MA 02141  
[alloyo@verizon.net](mailto:alloyo@verizon.net)  
[alloyorchestra.com](http://alloyorchestra.com)  
Tel.: +1 617 497-6508