



THE DAWN CHORUS

ABOUT THE FILM

A CINEMATIC MEDITATION OF THE DAWN
OF MAY 3, 2020 AS OBSERVED FROM
AROUND THE WORLD DURING THE
COVID-19 LOCKDOWN


Part covid diary, part meditation on rebirth in the midst of crisis, **The Dawn Chorus** is a global film project consisting of cinematic and contemplative scenes of dawn captured on May 3, 2020 – International Dawn Chorus Day – from all over the globe weaved together into a lyrical meditation on the first light and sounds of the day. All scenes were captured safely by professional and amateur filmmakers and sound recordists from their unique vantage point while on lockdown. The film pieces together footage of the dawn of May 3, 2020 into a singular experience as a metaphor for hope as we pause and contemplate the version of ourselves and the world we will bring forward as the dawn breaks on this trying time.



**WE MUST LEARN TO REAWAKEN AND KEEP OURSELVES
AWAKE, NOT BY MECHANICAL AID, BUT BY AN INFINITE
EXPECTATION OF THE DAWN.**

HENRY DAVID THOREAU



A photograph of a volcanic eruption at dawn. A large, dark plume of smoke and ash rises from a mountain peak on the left side of the frame. The sky is a gradient of colors, from a deep blue at the top to a bright orange and red near the horizon. In the foreground, the dark, silhouetted peaks of mountains are visible. The overall scene is serene yet powerful, capturing a moment of natural beauty and awe.

Everything has a song, everything vibrates. A symphony of light and sound and smells. Even the rock I sit on seems endowed with some sort of animus. For a moment I feel somewhat ... anxious. Am I allowed here, listening, witnessing what seems a sacred moment -- dawn. Does nature approve? Then cow bells far, far away. And then, almost as proof that I am not the only human being on this planet earth, the church bells from the Schöntal Abbey in the valley, marking 6 a.m. A few minutes after: sunrise. I close my eyes. Right now, there is absolutely nothing I want to change about my life.

Janos Tedeschi
Jura, Switzerland

FEATURING

35 FILMMAKERS / 13 COUNTRIES

Gershon Arul	Chennai, India
Fred Bell	Searchlight, Nevada
Caitlin Carroll & Brad Forder	Washington, DC
Marco Coslovich	Trieste, Italy
Kevin Driedger	Three Rivers, Michigan
Ewan Dryburgh	Winchester, United Kingdom
Adam Forrester	Atlanta, Georgia
Laura Giannone & Simon Houk	Joyce, Washington
Angel Perez Grandi	Enniskillen, Ireland
Cassidy Hall	Indianapolis, Indiana
Carlin Hsueh	Garvanza, California
Anna Kolber	Los Angeles, California
Nastassia K T	Tabio, Colombia
Benjamin Kitzinger	San Diego, California
Alex Kozobolis	Brighton, United Kingdom
Daniel Kunz	Bellmund, Switzerland
Luwin Kwan	Duarte, California
Peyton Lea	Chapel Hill, North Carolina
Palmer Morse	Oakland, California
Aaron O'Sullivan	Lake Tahoe CA
Makara Ouch	Battambang Province, Cambodia
Patrick Shen	Monrovia, California
Palōmi Rānī Sheth	Venice, California
Tiar Simorangkir	Jakarta, Indonesia
Soumaya & Ahmed Snoussi	Bizerte, Tunisia
Terrance Stewart	Glendale, California
Arthur Sukiasyan	Yerevan, Armenia
Janos Tedeschi	Jura, Switzerland
Mark van Tongeren	Longtan, Taiwan
Ioanna Tsoucala	Attica, Greece
Andy Tzou	Los Angeles, California
Brandon Vedder	Auburn, California

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

We gathered contributions from 35 filmmakers in 13 countries – from Cambodia to Italy to Armenia – to piece together this 21-minute film. The film weaves together meditative shots of the dawn of May 3 as observed, in most cases, from our unique lockdown perspectives as a metaphor of rebirth, something many of us are contemplating during this time as we start to imagine what we and the world will look like when we emerge from these crises. From the exotic calls of a Malaysian Night Heron captured in a park in Taiwan to a Muslim call to prayer captured from a rooftop in Cambodia, each shot also has a story to tell, one in which the sounds and sights merge with a felt presence of the individual behind the camera to form an intimate portrait of a moment in time. *The Dawn Chorus* is not meant to be a highlight reel of beautiful shots of the dawn but rather an embodied experience of witnessing the first light and sounds of the day, one that mimics the rhythms and pacing of such a gesture. It's an opportunity for viewers to pause and contemplate the version of themselves and the world we will bring forward as the dawn breaks on this trying time.

Patrick Shen

Monrovia, California

[BACKGROUND]

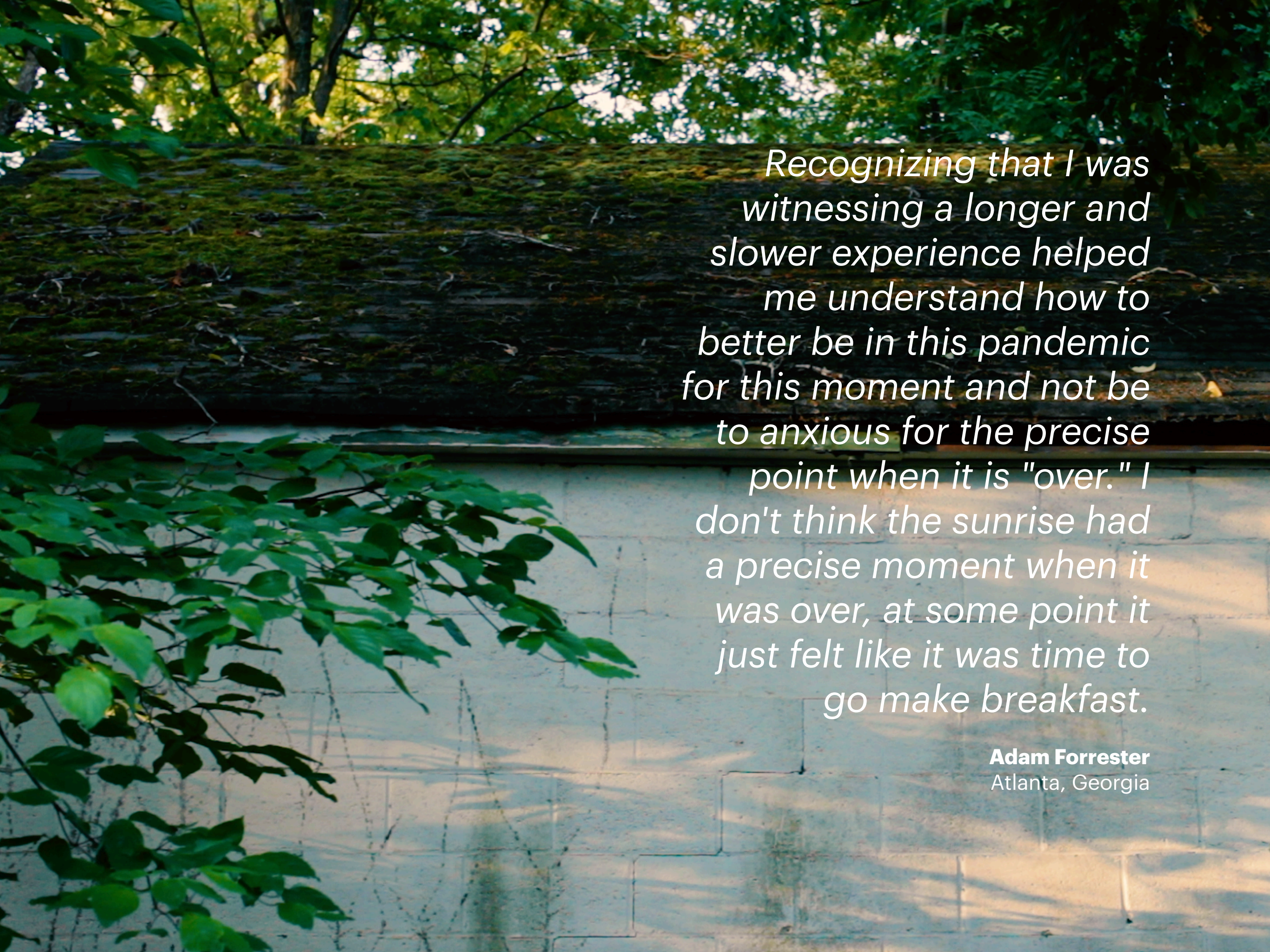
SYMBOLISM OF THE DAWN

For thousands of years across cultures, the sunrise has been a sacred time for personal and community rituals. This change from night to day has long been a powerful and transformative time for spiritual practice. Sunrise symbolizes new beginnings, resurrection, and renewal.

- **The Newgrange monument** is located northeastern Ireland and is thought to date back to about 3200 B.C. During sunrise on the winter solstice, the sun pours into the main chambers.
- The aboriginal **sunrise ceremony** is one of oldest traditions of the First Nation culture. *"A sunrise ceremony is to watch the sun come up, to see if that sun will acknowledge us, to give us energy we need for the day. If a person is true and honest to himself or herself, if their prayers are strong that morning, they can see the sun dance."* –Madonna O’Nabigon, Cree Nation
- **The Apache Sunrise Ceremony** is an arduous 4-day ceremony that an Apache girl goes through after her first menstruation. For over 70 years it was banned by the U.S. government. With the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, the Sunrise ceremony could openly be practiced on reservations again.
- **International Dawn Chorus Day** has grown from a small event in Birmingham in the 1980s to a global annual celebration, enjoyed in over eighty countries. Held annually on the first Sunday in May, people rise early to listen to bird song at organized events.




At first sign of the sun, people hold up their hands to greet the light in an Aymara celebration of the winter solstice in Bolivia. Photo by Jose Luis Quintana

A photograph of a mossy roof and a stone wall with green foliage in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

*Recognizing that I was
witnessing a longer and
slower experience helped
me understand how to
better be in this pandemic
for this moment and not be
to anxious for the precise
point when it is "over." I
don't think the sunrise had
a precise moment when it
was over, at some point it
just felt like it was time to
go make breakfast.*

Adam Forrester
Atlanta, Georgia



If change is the driving force of the universe, why are we so afraid of it? Now more than ever before we understand the idea of connectivity. The world makes a pause. Only nature continues its daily routine giving us the idea of continuity. It is the first time that people give space to the planet. It is the first time that we understand our existence. At the end of this scenario in which the universe is the director, infinite possibilities are open. On this dawn, I felt a connection with all of the filmmakers in different parts of the world. For some moments, we shared our fears and hopes. It was like all together we silently wrote a note, a massive wish, and we left it there, in the universe. In the end, I remember the words of the Greek philosopher Plato: 'We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light'.

Ioanna Tsoucala

Attica, Greece



A photograph of a vast, dense forest of green trees, likely a deciduous forest, under a soft, hazy sky. The trees are in various shades of green, and the overall scene is peaceful and natural. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

**WHAT WE HEAR WHEN WE LISTEN TO THE DAWN
CHORUS CIRCLE THE PLANET IS WE REALLY
HEAR LIFE AWAKEN TO THE FUTURE.**

GORDON HEMPTON

CREDITS

PRODUCED BY	Patrick Shen + Brandon Vedder
DIRECTED + EDITED BY	Patrick Shen
SOUND RE-RECORDING MIXER	Matt Mikkelsen
MUSIC BY	Masayoshi Fujita (Erased Tapes Records)

CONTACT

THE CINEMA GUILD North American Sales	info@cinemaguild.com
--	--

TRANSCENDENTAL MEDIA Production Company	info@transcendfilms.com
--	--

Website	dawnchorusfilm.com
---------	--