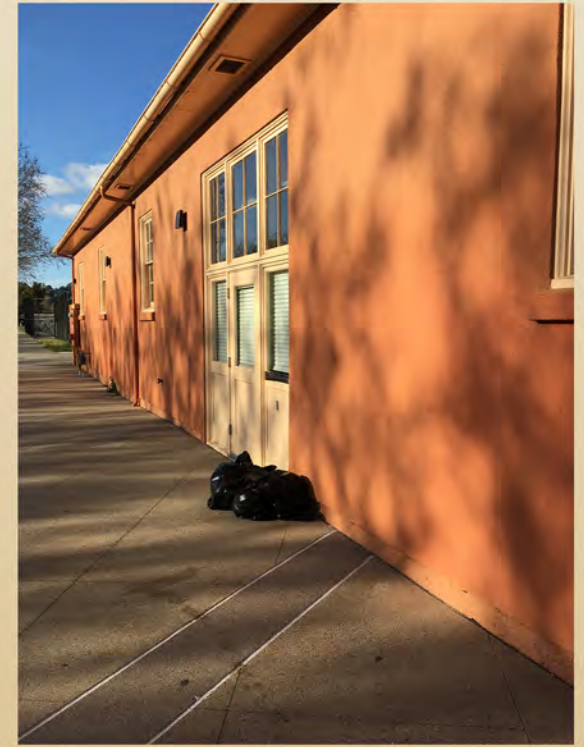


EQUINOX THE MUSICAL



*Equinox the Musical is the story of a momentous day
in the life of two homeless young lovers
who discover that forgiveness, gratitude and love
can be the keys to surviving even the most challenging circumstances.*





How & Why Equinox the Musical Exists – Writer/Composer’s Statement

I awoke on the fall equinox, made myself coffee-to-go, and walked out beneath the lightening pre-dawn sky to the bluff overlooking Monterey Bay, to photograph the sunrise.

Musing on the equinox theme as I walked along – equal day and night, equal darkness and light; a picture of balance – I was struck by a surge of inspiration, a slowly rolling tidal wave of thought and feeling.

Why is balance, so easily achieved when we walk, one foot in front of the other, so elusive in life? Even cosmically, here on Earth, there are just two days out of every 365 when day and night are in balance.

How do we cope with the stressors that daily threaten to push us off our stride? How does someone in less fortunate circumstances – someone who is destitute, or homeless – maintain any sense of balance in the daily struggle just to survive?

At that time my wife was working as a counselor in a homeless shelter in Santa Cruz.

What affected me most in the stories she’d tell about people experiencing homelessness was just how loving and generous so many of them were, in spite of the traumas that had led them to becoming unhoused, with the chaos, distress, and disorientation that followed.

How noble they were in spirit, even as their life circumstances had been so humbled.

How grateful they were for any small kindness they received, and for the care given them by the shelter staff.

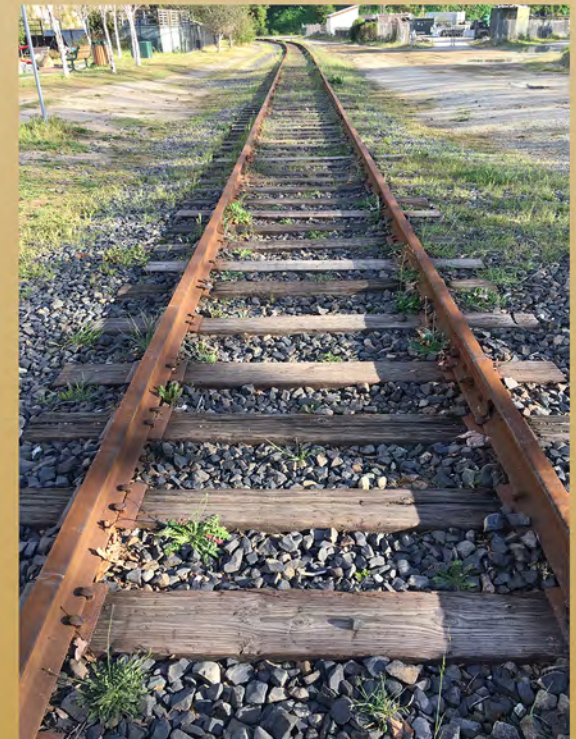
How forgiving they could be of those who had hurt them, and how magnanimous they were in the face of the devastating events that had brought them to the homeless shelter.

Everyone has a story, and when we see someone on the street we often have no idea what their story is.

The public face of homelessness is too often a raving madman or a stumbling, slurring addict, while many others suffer the indignities of a life gone awry with a quiet dignity, a loving word, a generous gesture.

The need to tell their stories inspired the creation of Equinox the Musical in story and song.

- Armand Ruby



Making Magic Happen – Director's Statement

There is a magic that happens when the heart-inspired music of Equinox is interwoven with the inspiring characters and their stories.

Directing Equinox originally as a stage play in Santa Cruz, California was at once one of the most challenging and most rewarding experiences of my life. The stage production had the support of the local homeless shelter, and several people experiencing homelessness were included in the original cast. Among many other things, what I learned from that experience is that homeless people, like everyone else, want to live, to laugh; they want to create; they want to sing and dance. And they will literally give the shirt off their back if they can help someone else in need.

Wanting to reach the largest possible audience with their stories, I became inspired to make Equinox into a feature film. After an interval that included surviving cancer, I began studying filmmaking in earnest, and under the guidance of San Francisco-based mentor Tom E. Brown, in fall, 2021 I wrote and directed a short musical film, "I Said I Will", starring Santa Cruz-area singer James Durbin. "I Said I Will" has won several film festival awards (see below).

That first, amazing filmmaking experience affirmed that not only was I capable of being a filmmaker, but that now I have to continue doing it.

Throughout the pandemic year of 2021 I also worked with a crack musical team, principally esteemed musician, arranger and producer Julian Colbeck, to record a "preview soundtrack"* of the songs from Equinox.

The world needs to see and hear this story and the music that helps drive it, and I've made it my personal mission to bring it to the screen.

- Armand Ruby

*Visit www.equinoxmusical.com where you can listen to clips from the Equinox preview soundtrack.





EQUINOX MUSICAL LLC

Equinox Musical LLC exists to present music and film that move people, while being a positive influence in the world.

SUN SPEARS

Sun Spears is the production company responsible for filmmaking under Equinox Musical LLC.



The short musical film, "I Said I Will", Sun Spears' initial offering, has won recognition from several film festivals as an Official Selection, and has won the following awards:

- BEST SOUNDTRACK - Dallas Movie Awards Festival, Jan 2022
- BEST MUSIC VIDEO - Toronto Film and Script Awards, Winter 2021
- BEST ORIGINAL SCORE - Phoenix Short Film Festival, Nov 2021
- MERIT AWARD - Depth of Field International Film Festival, Fall 2021
- BEST FIRST TIME FILMMAKER - Roma Shorts Film Festival, Fall 2021

"I Said I Will" also was an OFFICIAL SELECTION of:
Kansas Arthouse Festival, Winter 2021
Vegas Shorts, Dec. 2021
Miami Indie Film Awards, Nov. 2021
Berlin International Art Film Festival, 2021
Amsterdam Short Film Festival, 2021
Toronto Indie Shorts Film Festival, 2021
Venice Shorts Film Festival, 2021

A music video ("I Don't Want to Walk Away", featuring the song of the same name, with final mix by Alan Parsons) was excerpted from "I Said I Will" and is available for viewing on YouTube.





EQUINOX the MUSICAL

Sun Spears' next project is Equinox the Musical.

Truly a Santa Cruz story, Equinox the Musical will be a feature film with social impact, intended to not just entertain its audience but also to inspire.

In a moment of great social upheaval and uncertainty, the timing for Equinox the Musical is auspicious, as the film's core messages of tolerance and compassion speak directly to our ongoing public debates around social justice issues.

The Primary Target Audience skews youth-to-young-adult, but the film and its music are expected to have broad appeal to viewers of all ages, as the two youthful leads are portrayed in a social context of adults of widely varying ages, who each have their own compelling stories.

www.equinoxmusical.com

EQUINOX THE MUSICAL

SYNOPSIS

Early morning on the fall equinox. In the pre-dawn glow we approach the still sleeping City of Santa Cruz from across Monterey Bay.

"Time to wake up!" The homeless shelter residents drowsily stir, as their support network of counselors and administrators also rise across the city in their cozy homes.

One by one they join in singing "It's A New Day", the opening ensemble number, which bursts onto the screen like fireworks as they all converge at the shelter.

Left alone on the concrete lot that passes for open space at the shelter, the young Jason and Katie express their love for one another, singing "You Must Be My Valentine", and dream of being able to move out of the shelter into a place of their own.

But just moments later, Jason is called into the office and told he's being exited from the shelter, having violated shelter rules against possessing substances for sale – in his case, a big bag of weed.

Crushed by the news and fearful of the unknown path that lies immediately ahead, Jason attempts to reassure Katie, knowing that he will be a target once out on the street.

Agreeing to meet back up later in the day, they go their separate ways to face their destinies, fraught with traumatic reminders of the past and danger in the present. Katie's concern for Jason's welfare and her distress over the uncertainty of their future trigger memories of her own trauma of past abuse.

Katie seeks solace from the elder homeless wise-woman, Phoebe, who reveals her own tragic story and shares with Katie how forgiveness has helped her to live life fully ("I Learned to Forgive").

Inspired by Phoebe's resiliency, Katie walks on with a renewed dedication to living life on her own terms, singing "Song of Wonder".

Meanwhile, Jason has been threatened by some hostile thugs, and in a dark-night-of-the-soul moment, he sings the agonizingly plaintive "Where Do I Go Now?" But as he continues through his day, inspiration and support are forthcoming from unexpected sources, leading him to a more positive frame of mind ("Love Can Set You Free", "Gratitude").

All of which is thrown into the background as Jason is assaulted, robbed, and left bleeding on the railroad tracks.

The surprising resolution – featuring a curmudgeonly computer science Professor with an anti-homeless attitude – brings the day to a close, with the full cast singing the reflective and soaring final musical number, "Equinox".



Fall Equinox 2010 Full Moonrise