

CREDITS:

William Tyler - Composer, Performer
Akiva Fox - Director
Steve Milligan - Projection Design
Rus Snelling - Lighting Design
Michael Mauren - Asst. Lighting Design
Zack Hall - Video Operator
Josh Lyon - Audio Engineer

SPECIAL THANKS:

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WILLIAM TYLER

Corduroy Roads

April 16, 2015

*A multimedia exploration of the American South
through rare, archival photography & original
music for guitar and electronics.*



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Corduroy Roads takes as its point of departure, two of the most iconic portfolios of Civil War photographs: Alexander Gardner's *Photographic Sketchbook of the Civil War* and George Barnard's *Photographic Views of Sherman's Campaign*. William Tyler, who grew up in Tennessee, Georgia and Mississippi, has been fascinated by the Civil War since childhood. After seeing firsthand the photographs from Gardner and Barnard's archives and receiving a commission from Duke Performances to create a new work, he set off on a year of researching, ruminating and composing.

The resulting work combines Tyler's music - instrumental pieces he plays on electric and acoustic guitars - with dual projection design, including a selection of photographs, sketches and insignia from the Gardner and Barnard collections, now 150 years old. Along with his collaborators, cinematographer Steve Milligan and theatre director Akiva Fox, Tyler plotted the "story" of *Corduroy Roads*, drawing upon his own experience growing up in an American South that, to him, has always seemed haunted, physically and spiritually, by the war. "This was more immediate to me than so much other history. The locations of the Barnard photographs of Tennessee and Georgia were places I had spent much of my childhood. Even now, folks where I live in Nashville dig up bullets and belt buckles in their backyards. The great battles took place very close to home."

The term "corduroy roads" was used to describe improvised log roads, meant to enable travel through otherwise impassable forest, and they were used by armies since the time of the Romans. General Sherman used the technique extensively during his famous march to the Georgia sea. For Tyler, the term, "symbolizes the parallel process of improvised construction and tactical destruction that accompanied the Northern war effort. The war carved out the land." And he says about the process of creating this work, "Much like the wet-plate photography process that Gardner, Barnard and all the other photographers of the era used, this was a manner of composition that involved a lot of patience, trial and error, and some degree of blind faith. It is my hope and belief that we camp up with something that at least honors the magnitude of the war and its legacy in its own ethereal way." OZ Arts is honored to present *Corduroy Roads* in Nashville, and to support the journey of artistic exploration and discovery for one of this city's great artists of his generation.

Corduroy Roads made its world premiere in four sold-out performances, November 20-23, 2014, at Duke Performances, the commissioner of the work. Indy Week wrote about the show that, "the net effect of the work - to explore the era's lingering romanticization, horrific reality and perpetual aftermath - was magnificent and eye-opening."

Corduroy Roads is made possible, in part, with support from the Archive of Documentary Arts at the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Duke University.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

Over the last five years, **William Tyler** has emerged as one of America's most expressive and evocative instrumentalists. For years, he was an in-demand sideman, becoming not only an essential component of Lambchop's exquisitely strange country orbit but also playing with the likes of the Silver Jews, Charlie Louvin and Will Oldham. After a solo outing as The Paper Hats, he emerged as a commanding and inventive band of one with 2010's *Behold the Spirit*. In 2013, he took another daring turn for *Impossible Truth*, his Merge Records debut: Tyler depended largely on the electric, a move that afforded those eight songs added grandeur and intrigue. His most recent release is the 2014 EP *Lost Colony*.

Durham, NC-based cinematographer **Steve Milligan** received his first camera credit for Stephanie Johnes' jumprope documentary *Doubletime*, which opened the South by Southwest Film Festival in 2007. Since then he has served as cinematographer on numerous feature documentaries, as well as short-form documentaries, commercials, narrative short films and music videos. His collaborators include Oscar-winners Vanessa Roth, Doug Blush, and Emmy-winners Gary Hawkins, Ted Bogosian and Nancy Buirsky. In 2013, *The Record Breaker*, directed by Brian McGinn, won the audience award at Full Frame and was honored at festivals around the world.

Akiva Fox is one of three artistic directors of Haymaker, a performance company based in Durham, NC. Before that, he spent six years as the Dramaturg and Literary Manager at the Shakespeare Theatre Company of Washington, DC.