

Local Composer to Hike and Create Symphony About the Appalachian Trail

Keane Southard, who grew up in Southborough and graduated from Algonquin Regional High School in 2005, will spend the summer hiking the New England portion of the Appalachian Trail and then will write a symphony based on the experience, commissioned by a consortium of orchestras throughout New England, each of which will premiere the work in the 2017-18 season. They are currently running an online crowdfunding campaign via Indiegogo in order to raise funds for the commission.

More than 700 miles of the 2200-mile Appalachian Trail pass through a total of five New England states, from Connecticut to Maine, and each state will give its name to one of the symphony's five movements. In addition to the Sage City Symphony, other orchestras co-commissioning the work include the Clafin Hill Symphony (Milford, MA), the Wellesley Symphony (Wellesley, MA), the Sage City Symphony (Bennington, VT) and the Wesleyan University Orchestra (Middletown, CT).

"This project will realize two lifelong goals of mine: to hike the Appalachian Trail and write a symphony," says Southard, who teaches at Bennington College in Bennington, VT. "But the project isn't just about realizing my own dreams. My hope is that the music will inspire people to enjoy and protect the beautiful wilderness here in New England."

Southard is partnering with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), the non-profit organization that maintains and advocates for the trail, to bring their mission to a larger audience. The work is scheduled to have a performance at the ATC's 2017 Biennial Conference at Colby College in Waterville, ME, co-sponsored by the Appalachian Mountain Club and Maine Appalachian Trail Club.

Those who pledge their support are able to receive rewards, such as an mp3 recording of work from a performance, a copy of the score signed by the composer, or even the ability to dedicate a movement of the work to a person of their choice. Visit the project's Indiegogo page at <http://igg.me/at/ATSymphony> to learn more and pledge.

Founded in 2008, Indiegogo is a crowd-funding website that allows artists to raise funds for projects from individual contributors. To date, over 200,000 projects have raised more than 800- million dollars.

Southard has been the recipient of many awards for his compositions, most recently the 2016 Colorado State Music Teachers Association Commissioned Composer Award, and 3rd prize in the Belvedere Festival Composition Contest. In 2013, he was a Fulbright scholar studying music education in Brazil and received his Masters degree in composition from the University of Colorado-Boulder.

For more information about Keane Southard please visit his website at keanesouthard.instantencore.com.