

# Wooden Cities

*Contemporary Music Ensemble, Résumé*

Brendan Fitzgerald, director

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## Artists

Brendan Fitzgerald, director conductor/percussion	M.M. Conducting Performance SUNY at Buffalo, 2011
Ethan Hayden, associate director ABD) voice/electronics	PhD Music Composition (enrolled, SUNY at Buffalo
Evan Courtin violin	B.A. Music (enrolled) Buffalo State College
Esin Gündüz voice	PhD Music Composition (enrolled) SUNY at Buffalo
Nathan Heidelberger ABD) horn	PhD Music Composition (enrolled, SUNY at Buffalo
Megan Kyle oboe	M.M. Oboe Performance DePaul University, 2013
Michael McNeill piano	M.M. in Modern American Music Longy School of Music, 2007
Zane Merritt guitar	PhD Music Composition (enrolled) SUNY at Buffalo
Katie Weissman 'cello	B.M. Cello Performance Boston University, 2008

## Selected Commissions

- 2014, May      Commissioned four new works for Inharmonicity Concert from composers TJ Borden (*new work*), Ethan Hayden (*in sonos benesonantibus*), Michael McNeill (*Sine Nomine*), Zane Merritt (*So Now, For Long*)
- 2014, February      Commissioned three new works for Muriel Wolf and Albert Steger Endowment Concert from composers Brendan Fitzgerald (*with/against*), Zane Merritt (*Burning City*), and Michael McNeill (*Heptagram*)

## Selected Lectures and Presentations

*"Sight as Sound: Making Music from Symbols"*

as teaching artists with Young Audiences of Western New York

- 2014, August      Mill Middle School (Williamsville, NY)  
2014, July      UB Speech-Language and Hearing Clinic (Buffalo, NY)  
2013, June      Lydia T. Wright School of Excellence (Buffalo, NY)

*Young Composer Workshops*

- 2014, June      Butler University (Indianapolis, IN)  
2014, April      University at Buffalo (Buffalo, NY)  
2013, December      University at Buffalo (Buffalo, NY)

*Student Composer Concerts (University at Buffalo undergraduate composers)*

- 2013, May      Pausa Art House (Buffalo, NY)  
2012, December      Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Centers (Buffalo, NY)

*"John Zorn's Cobra and musical quotation" (lecture to undergraduate composers)*

- 2012, October      University at Buffalo (Buffalo, NY)

## Professional Organizations

Young Audiences of Western New York [teaching artists]  
University Heights Arts Association

## Selected Awards and Sponsorships

- 2014 Funding from Muriel Wolf and Albert Steger Endowment, awarded by University at Buffalo Music Library
- 2012 WNY Music Awards Staff Pick: Best "Jam/Groove" Band [for performance of John Zorn's *Cobra*]

## Selected Articles/Reviews

All available at <http://www.woodencities.org/media/index.shtml>

- 2014, June "New-music ensemble from Buffalo enlivens Eidson-Duckwall Hall at Butler University", [Jay Harvey Upstage](#)
- 2014, April "A Postmodern City", [UB Spectrum](#), Emma Janicki
- 2014, January "Give Me Dangerous Music", [ArtVoice](#), Jan Jezioro
- 2014, January "Buckle your seatbelts! Wooden Cities will take to the Slee stage in February", [UB Reporter](#), Pat Donovan
- 2013, Summer "Buffalo New Music" [MusicWorks 116](#), Gayle Young
- 2013, April "Wooden Cities interprets *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden*", [RobertPhillipsMusic.com](#)
- 2013, January "Spotlight: Wooden Cities", [Buffalo Spree](#), Daniel Kushner
- 2012, December "Quartet Examines End of Time", [Buffalo News](#), Daniel Kushner

## Selected Programs

- 2014, June      *Summer Tour: Rust Belt Citizens*  
Wooden Cities performs their repertoire in Cleveland, Lafayette, Indianapolis, Louisville, and Toledo. Programs varied from city to city, but featured works by Ives, Pissaro, Oliveros, Berio, Sargent, Stadelman, Eastman, Bach, and members of the ensemble.
- 2014, May      *Inharmonicity: Music for Carillon and Ensemble*  
A full program of works by Buffalo composers, including four world premieres. Program featured music for ensemble, organ, choir, and carillon. Collaboration with Calvary Episcopal Church in Williamsville, NY, and featured the use of their carillon, organ, and featured members of the Calvary church choir.
- 2014, April      *An Excess of Voice: Steve McCaffery & Wooden Cities*  
Collaborated with author, scholar, and sound poet, Steve McCaffery, David Gray Chair of Poetry and Letters, SUNY at Buffalo, to curate and produce a program of sound poetry works for voices and instruments. Program featured works by McCaffery, Schwitters, Mac Low, and members of the ensemble, Evan Courtin and Ethan Hayden.
- 2014, April      *(B)uffalo (A)rt (D)ispensary Interactive Art Event*  
A two-part event in which audience members were invited to create works of art and graphic scores which were then interpreted and performed by Wooden Cities (with audience participation). Event also featured Joshua Nickerson and (B)(A)(D)Muses.
- 2014, Feb.      *Inaugural Muriel Wolf & Albert Steger Endowment Concert: (Re)Constructions*  
A full concert of works by Buffalo composers, including six world premieres (four pieces composed especially for the event), and reconstructions of works from the city's history of contemporary music, including pieces which had not seen performance in many years (funding awarded by UB Music Library).

2013, Dec.            *A Very Wooden Christmas*  
Wooden Cities composers set six early 20th century silent holiday films to music for chamber ensemble and electronics.

## Selected Repertoire

### *Classical works:*

- Georges Aperghis - selections from *Récitations* (1978)
- Daniel Bassin - *Gerard* (2011, rev. 2012)
- JS Bach - *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden*<sup>^</sup>
- Luciano Berio - *Sequenza VII* (1969)
- Benjamin Britten - *Nocturnal after John Dowland* (1963)
- Charles Ives - *General William Booth Enters Into Heaven* (1914)<sup>^</sup>
- Charles Ives - selections from *114 Songs* (1922)
- Julius Eastman - *Our Father* (1989)
- Lukas Foss - *Paradigm* (1968)
- Sofia Gubaidulina - *In Croce* (1979)
- Brice Johnson - *Afterthought* (2014)\*
- Steve McCaffery - *Carnival* (1967-75)
- Steve McCaffery - *Dilemma of the Meno* (1991)
- Pauline Oliveros - various Deep Listening pieces
- Yoko Ono - selections from *Grapefruit* (1964)
- Michael Pisaro - selections from *Tombstones* (2012)
- Will Redman - *Book* (2006)
- Terry Riley - *In C* (1964)
- Allen Sapp - *And the Bombers Went Home* (1943)
- Matt Sargent - *Tide* (2011, rev. 2013)
- Giacinto Scelsi - *Ixor* (1956)
- Arnold Schoenberg - "Erwartung," from 4 Lieder, Op. 2 (1899)
- Kurt Schwitters - *Ribble Bobble Pimlico* (1946)\*<sup>^</sup>
- Salvatore Sciarrino - *Perduto in una città d'acqua* (1991)
- Alexander Scriabin - *Prélude for the Left Hand Alone*, Op. 9 (1894)<sup>^</sup>
- Jeffrey Stadelman - *Koral 8* (2009)\*
- Jeffrey Stadelman - *Koral 12* (2009)\*
- Isang Yun - *Piri* (1971)

\* pieces premiered by Wooden Cities  
<sup>^</sup> arranged for Wooden Cities' instrumentation

## Selected Repertoire (cont.)

*Works composed by members of the ensemble:*

- TJ Borden - *new work* (2014)\*
- Evan Courtin - *Good Form* (2011)\*
- Brendan Fitzgerald - *with/against* (2014)\*
- Esin Gündüz - *i filosofi della colina* (2009)
- Esin Gündüz - *Looking at/Towards/On Top of: Mount Agri [Ararat]* (2013)
- Ethan Hayden - *(tRas)* (2014)
- Ethan Hayden - *in sonos benesonantibus* (2014)\*
- Ethan Hayden - *in the beginning was the word* (2014)
- Nathan Heidelberger - *Descriptions of the Moon* (2011)
- Nathan Heidelberger - *a refrain one keeps playing...* (2011, rev. 2013)
- Nathan Heidelberger - *Cadence* (2013)\*
- Nathan Heidelberger - *Occasionally, music* (2013)\*
- Michael McNeill - *Heptagram* (2014)\*
- Michael McNeill - *Sine Nomine* (2014)\*
- Zane Merritt - *Burning City* (2014)\*
- Zane Merritt - *So Now, For Long* (2014)\*
- Zane Merritt - *The Reputation* (2013)\*
- Zane Merritt - *Hot Cola* (2013)

*Improvised Music/Game Pieces:*

- Ethan Hayden - *Monte* (2012)\*
- Zane Merritt - *In Memoriam Brooks Frederickson* (2009)
- Wooden Cities - *Chain Gang* (2014)\*
- John Zorn - *Cobra* (1984)

*Popular Music Arrangements:*

- David Bowie (selected songs)^
- Sigur Rós (selected songs)^
- Tom Waits - *Anywhere I Lay My Head*^

\* pieces premiered by Wooden Cities  
^ arranged for Wooden Cities' instrumentation

## **Ensemble Biography**

*Why is Wooden Cities and innovative ensemble?*

Wooden Cities is both an ensemble and a collective of performers and composers seeking to help increase the performance and awareness of contemporary music in the Western New York area through unique, educational presentations. Formed in July 2011, the group served as a vehicle for director Brendan Fitzgerald to present John Zorn's game piece *Cobra*. Since that time, the ensemble has grown to nearly a dozen performers and is constantly seeking new works by new composers while continuing to present works by some of the essential, yet underrepresented composers of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Wooden Cities has spent the last three years committing itself to performing and presenting new works in quality performance venues including Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center, PAUSA Art House, St. Joseph's University Parish, Unity Church of Buffalo, Lippes Concert Hall (SUNY Buffalo), and unconventional spaces including Silo City (Buffalo's waterfront), Talking Leaves Bookstore, and the UB Speech-Language and Hearing Clinic. Central to Wooden Cities' mission is a desire to introduce audiences and students to contemporary music. Programs are often designed in an attempt to expose audiences to new musical experiences and ways of listening. These have included participatory projects such as the "(B)uffalo (A)rt (D)ispensary Interactive Art Event" (April 2014) in which the ensemble performed audience-penned graphic scores. Teaming up with Young Audiences of Western New York, Wooden Cities has performed programs in elementary and middle schools in an effort to encourage students to explore new methods of creating, performing, and thinking about music.

As a collective of composers and performers, Wooden Cities has arranged a number of works from the classical canon for their unique instrumentation (a non-traditional miscellany of voices, percussion, oboe, and electric guitar among others), in addition to premiering over twenty new works by Buffalo-based composers. The ensemble's diverse repertoire also includes popular music arrangements, game pieces, and free improvisation explorations.

Wooden Cities has gained a reputation for presenting diverse programs which pull together a wide range of pieces, while still emphasizing works by local (Western New York) composers. Recent programs have included collaborative concerts with sound poet Steve McCaffery, and with the choir, carillonneur, and organist of Calvary Episcopal Church (Williamsville, NY). The ensemble has also presented several multimedia programs, including collaborations with dancer Melanie Aceto and visual artist Megan Mett , as well as performing live scores to silent Christmas films in December 2013. With funding from the Muriel Wolf and Albert Steger Endowment, Wooden Cities has also reconstructed several works from Buffalo's rich history of contemporary music, presenting works such as Lejaren Hiller's *Avalanche* (1968), which had not been performed for many years.

Under the direction of conductor and percussionist Brendan Fitzgerald, Wooden Cities is both an artist-centered and artist-run ensemble.