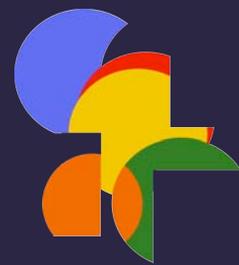


# Wooden Cities

Contemporary Music Ensemble

Brendan Fitzgerald, director

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## Ensemble Biography:

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 group 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 five years committing itself to performing and presenting works in quality performance venues including Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center, PAUSA Art House, St. Joseph's University Parish, Unity Church of Buffalo, Silo City, Lippes Hall (SUNY Buffalo), and more. During that time, the ensemble has premiered almost twenty newly composed works, including four pieces commissioned specifically for the ensemble itself. With funding from the Muriel Wolf and Albert Steger Endowment, Wooden Cities has also reconstructed several works from Buffalo's rich history or contemporary music, presenting works—such as Lejaren Hiller's *Avalanche* (1968)—which had not seen a performance for many years. As a collective of composers and arrangers, Wooden Cities has created an extensive repertoire of new pieces of contemporary music, arrangements of works from the classical music canon, scores for silent films, and popular music arrangements, while also frequently engaging in free improvisation and game pieces.

## Repertoire:

Wooden Cities' varied repertoire allows it to present a variety of programs, which range from classically-oriented programs of chamber music, avant garde experimentalism and free improvisation, to more rock-oriented performances and arrangements of popular music tunes. The ensemble attempts to tailor programs to best suit the performance space, and invites venues to request particular pieces or assist in the goal of crafting a program which adapts the ensembles skills to suit the particular strengths of the space. The ensemble's recent seasons have included programs which feature Buffalo composers, Fluxus and Deep Listening strategies, sound poetry and graphic music, sacred music, and ambient/atmospheric music.

## Chamber Music:

Louis Andriessen – selections from *The Memory of Roses* (1961-1993)

Georges Aperghis - selections from *Récitations* (1978)

Daniel Bassin - *Gerard* (2011, rev. 2012)

Samuel Barber - "The Crucifixion" (1953)

Luciano Berio - *Sequenza VII* (1969) ([audio](#))

Benjamin Britten - *Nocturnal after John Dowland* (1963)

Gavin Bryars - *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet* (1975)

John Cage – *Imaginary Landscape No. 1* (1939)

Charles Ives - *General William Booth Enters Into Heaven* (1914) ([audio](#))

Charles Ives - selections from *114 Songs* (1922)

Julius Eastman - *Stay On It* (1973)

Julius Eastman - *Our Father* (1989)

Morton Feldman - *The Viola in My Life III* (1970)

Morton Feldman - *Voice, Violin, and Piano* (1976)

Lukas Foss - *Paradigm* (1968)\* ([audio](#))

Esin Gündüz - *i filosofi della colina* (2009)

Esin Gündüz - *Looking at/Towards/On Top of: Mount Agri [Ararat]* (2013)

Nathan Heidelberger - *Descriptions of the Moon* (2011)

Nathan Heidelberger - *a refrain one keeps playing...* (2011, rev. 2013)

Steve McCaffery - *Carnival* (1967-75)

Zane Meritt - *In Memoriam Brooks Frederickson* (2009)

Zane Meritt - *Hot Cola* (2013)

Pauline Oliveros - various Deep Listening pieces

Michael Pisaro - Selections from *Tombstones* (2012) ([audio](#))

Will Redman - *Book* (2006)

Terry Riley - *In C* (1964) ([audio](#))

Allen Sapp - *And the Bombers Went Home* (1943)

Matt Sargent - *Tide* (2011, rev. 2013)

Arnold Schoenberg - "Erwartung," from *4 Lieder, Op. 2* (1899) ([audio](#))

Salvatore Sciarrino - *Perduto in una città d'acqua* (1991)

Colin Tucker – *Morass* (2010, rev. 2015)

\* performance of this piece possible only if venue is able to provide certain percussion instruments



## Repertoire (cont.):

Jeffrey Stadelman - *Sea Change* (1989)

Karlheinz Stockhausen - *Tierkreis* (1975)

Isang Yun - *Piri* (1971)

John Zorn - *Cobra* (1984) ([video](#))

## Chamber Music premiered by Wooden Cities:

Girilal Baars - *Fair Margaret* (2015)

Brendan Fitzgerald - *with/against* (2014)

Meredith Gilna - *Jack Green* (2014)

John Albert Harris - *Chemical Fix in a Foreign Body* (2014)

Ethan Hayden - *Monte* (2012)

Ethan Hayden - *in the beginning was the word* (2014)

Ethan Hayden - "...ce dangereux supplément..." (2015)

Ethan Hayden - *From "In"* (2015)

Ethan Hayden - *Let's celebrate our corpse-strewn future!* (2015)

Nathan Heidelberger - *Cadence* (2013)

Nathan Heidelberger - *Occasionally, music* (2013) ([audio](#))

Brice Johnson - *Afterthought* (2014)

Michael McNeill - *Heptagram* (2014)

Zane Merritt - *Burning City* (2014) ([audio](#))

Zane Merritt - *The Reputation* (2013)

Zane Merritt - *Sex-Bot (Serial No. 5347)...* (2014)

Zane Merritt - *Magenta Ice Cream Attack* (2015)

Jeffrey Stadelman - *Koral 8* (2009)

Jeffrey Stadelman - *Koral 12* (2009)\*

Wooden Cities - *Chain Gang* (2014) ([audio](#))

In addition to the above works, Wooden Cities has arranged popular works by the following artists for their unique classical instrumentation: Björk, Outkast, Radiohead, Sigur Rós, Talking Heads, Tom Waits, David Bowie ([video](#)).

"It has been my pleasure to hear Wooden Cities performing a wide variety of contemporary music on numerous occasions. Having run my own new music ensemble for over 25 years, I understand the challenges of starting a group from scratch, developing and maintaining a solid artistic identity, and creating a niche for a unique musical product. Wooden Cities is more than up to the task, and I look forward to hearing and seeing what they present in the future. I have the highest admiration for this ensemble."

Jon Nelson

Professor, University at Buffalo, Music Department  
Founding Member/Trumpet, Meridian Arts Ensemble



## Workshops and Outreach:

Central to Wooden Cities' mission is a desire to introduce audiences and students to contemporary musical aesthetics and performance practice. Programs are often designed in an attempt to expose audiences to new musical experiences and ways of listening. The ensemble is also devoted to working with young musicians and encouraging them to explore new methods of creating, performing, and thinking about music. Through a variety of programs and workshops, Wooden Cities hopes to engage students in absorbing discussions and unique musical exercises aimed at increasing their awareness and experience of contemporary music.



Wooden Cities has designed a number of programs and workshops designed to achieve these goals, which can be adapted to each audience's level of experience with contemporary music. Such programs explore such topics as graphic notation ("Sights as Sound: Making Music from Symbols"), the historical precedents of contemporary music ("Classical to Contemporary"), and personality dynamics in improvised music ("Guerrilla Operations: John Zorn's Cobra").



## Press:

Learn more about Wooden Cities:

- [Cobra with Greece Olympia in Rochester City Newspaper](#) by D. Kushner (January 2016)
- [FinnFest preview in The Public](#) by Christina Saarinen (October 2015)
- [Wooden Cities guest host's WBNY's The Upstate Soundscape](#) (February 2014)
- [Wolf Endowment Concert preview interview on WNED](#) (February 2014)
- ["Give Me Dangerous Music" in ArtVoice](#) by Jan Jezioro (January 2014)



## Personnel / Instrumentation

Megan Kyle, oboe/english horn • David Wegehaupt, saxophones  
Nathan Heidelberger, horn/keyboards  
Esin Gündüz, voice • Ethan Hayden, voice/trombone  
Evan Courtin, violin • Katie Weissman, 'cello  
Brendan Fitzgerald, conductor/percussion