

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 11, 2013

Contact: Esin Gündüz, Brendan Fitzgerald
(716) 222-2735

Wooden Cities presents *Rise and Fall: Songs for All Souls* at Pausa Art House.

Lukas Foss - *Paradigm* (1968)

Julius Eastman - *Our Father* (1989)

Nathan Heidelberger - *Occasionally, music* (2013)

Charles Ives – “Maple Leaves” and “The White Gulls” from *114 Songs* (1922)

Arnold Schoenberg – “Erwartung,” Op. 2, from *4 Lieder* (1899)

Charles Ives - *General William Booth Enters into Heaven* (1914)

Michael Pisaro – “Blues fall” and “New Orleans” (2012)

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

Isang Yun - *Piri* (1971)

October 26, 2013

Pausa Art House

8:00pm

19 Wadsworth Street

Buffalo, NY 14201

\$5 cover

Recently named winners of the Inaugural Murial Wolf and Albert Steger Endowment (2014), Buffalo-based contemporary music collective Wooden Cities will present the first concert of its 2013-14 season: an autumnal collection of works reflecting on spiritual -- and sometimes literal -- ascent and descent. The program will feature several new works by ensemble members as well as pieces by iconic 20th century composers with connections to Buffalo.

The program will open with “Blues Fall” and “New Orleans,” songs from Buffalo-born composer Michael Pisaro’s 2012 ghostly collection, *Tombstones*. Pisaro takes single lines out of their original popular song contexts and stretches them into otherworldly soundscapes. Pisaro explains, “I chose pieces that say something about the current political situation when they were written...The chosen lines are epitaphs for a period when there was some sort of political interaction between the songwriter and the world. Whatever situation it was responding to is no longer in the air, and what we know about the situation comes from the song itself.”

Another ghost eulogized in the program is Julius Eastman, a tragic figure in American contemporary music. As a gay African American who was pioneer in, antagonist toward, and victim of the conservative, mostly white classical music establishment, Eastman railed against the status quo of injustice and inequality. Sadly, he unraveled in a self-destructive spiral despite his prodigious talents, dying alone in Buffalo in 1990 after months of homelessness. *Our Father*, written for two male voices, was composed in the last year of his life and stands in sharp contrast to many of his fiercely tumultuous minimalist scores. Critic Michael McDonagh describes it as

“a powerful evocation of the contrast between the eternal present... and the fleeting present of its shifting chromatic writing.”

The program will also feature several well-known songs by Charles Ives, including an arrangement of *General William Booth Enters into Heaven* by Wooden Cities member, Ethan Hayden. The song, Hayden says, “describes a spectacular mess of lurching lepers, vermin-eaten saints, big-voiced lassies, and fanatical, unwashed loons with trumpets. Ives illustrates the crooked asymmetry of this disparate group in his boisterous setting, which is constantly changing styles, and which seems barely able to remain in one key at a time... as *General Booth* demonstrates, there can be a certain transcendence to such chaotic disarray.”

Wooden Cities will also pay tribute to Lukas Foss, a notable and influential figure in Buffalo’s musical history. *Paradigm*, written during Foss’ tenure as director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, is an experimental, partially improvised piece. Foss says he is interested in what he calls “dangerous music,” placing it in opposition to “safe” music: “Improvisation that works is improvisation made safe... Chance music is safe music if we accept any result as nature having its way.”

Later this season, on February 7, 2014, Wooden Cities will present the Inaugural Murial Wolf and Albert Steger Endowment Concert at Lippes Concert Hall of the University at Buffalo at 7:30pm. Entitled *(Re)Constructions*, the program will consist entirely of works by Buffalo composers, including Lukas Foss, Lejaren Hiller, Allen Sapp, and Anton Wolf. The ensemble will perform recently composed pieces as well as reconstructions of pieces from Buffalo's rich history of new music. Admission is free.

The Wooden Cities ensemble seeks to increase the performance and awareness of contemporary classical music in the Western New York through unique, educational presentations. The group first formed in July of 2011 to present John Zorn's game piece, *Cobra*. Since that time, the group has rapidly expanded its repertoire to include traditionally-notated works, graphic scores, and improvisatory music. Wooden Cities remains committed to seeking new works by young composers, while presenting essential, yet underrepresented composers of the 20th Century.

The ensemble has presented events at many of Western New York’s most important arts venues, including at St. Joseph's University Parish, The Vault, Pausa Art House, and Griffis Sculpture Park. The group has held residencies at the University at Buffalo for undergraduate composition seminars, and has recently become teaching artists with Young Audiences of Western New York. Specific educational performances include a lecture/performance to SUNY at Buffalo students in the fall of 2012 and an educational program on graphic notation at the Dr. Lydia T. Wright School of Excellence entitled “Sights as Sound: Making Meaning from Symbols” in the spring of 2013. The ensemble was featured on 91.3 WBNY in August 2012 and May 2013.

///

For more information, or to schedule an interview with Esin Gündüz or Brendan Fitzgerald, please call (716) 222-2735 or email info@woodencities.org.