

*The University at Buffalo Music Library presents*

# wooden cities

## (Re)Constructions

Inaugural Concert Funded by the  
Music Library's Muriel Wolf and  
Albert Steger Endowment

Brendan Fitzgerald,  
conductor & artistic director

February 7, 2014  
7:30 pm

Lippes Concert Hall

## Program

*Sonatine* (1963) Anton Wolf  
 I. Allegretto—Meno Mosso—Tempo primo (1914-1989)  
 II. With Simplicity—Piu Mosso, molto marcato—Meno Mosso  
 III. Toccata: Allegro molto  
 Michael McNeill, piano

*Looking at / Towards / On Top of: Mount Ağrı* (2013) Esin Gündüz  
 (b. 1983)  
 Esin Gündüz, voice • TJ Borden, cello

*Heptagram* (2014)\* Michael McNeill  
 (b. 1982)  
 Esin Gündüz and Ethan Hayden, voice • Megan  
 Kyle, oboe • Nathan Heidelberg, horn • Michael  
 McNeill, piano • Zane Merritt, electric guitar •  
 Evan Courtin, violin • TJ Borden, cello • Brendan  
 Fitzgerald, prompter

*Koral 8* (2009)\* Jeffrey Stadelman  
 (b. 1959)  
 Ethan Hayden, voice • Megan Kyle, oboe

*with/against* (2014)\* Brendan Fitzgerald  
 (b. 1986)  
 Zane Merritt and Brendan Fitzgerald, guitars

*An Avalanche* (1968) Lejaren Hiller  
 (1924-1994)  
 Pitchman.....Ethan Hayden  
 Prima Donna.....Esin Gündüz  
 Percussionist.....Brendan Fitzgerald  
 Stagehands.....Evan Courtin  
 Nathan Heidelberg  
 Michael McNeill  
 Audio Technician.....Zane Merritt  
 Costumieres.....TJ Borden  
 Megan Kyle

*Koral 12* (2009)\* Jeffrey Stadelman  
 (b. 1959)  
 Ethan Hayden, voice • Megan Kyle, oboe  
 Brendan Fitzgerald, glockenspiel

*And the Bombers Went Home* (1943) Allen Sapp  
 (1922-1999)  
 Evan Courtin, violin • Michael McNeill, piano

*Burning City* (2014)\* Zane Merritt  
 (b. 1985)  
 Esin Gündüz and Ethan Hayden, voice • Megan  
 Kyle, oboe and English horn • Nathan  
 Heidelberg, piano • Michael McNeill, harmonium  
 Zane Merritt, electric guitar • Evan Courtin, violin  
 TJ Borden, cello

*Occasionally, music* (2013)\* Nathan Heidelberg  
 (b. 1987)  
 I.  
 II.  
 III.  
 Evan Courtin, violin • TJ Borden, cello

*Paradigm* (1968) Lukas Foss  
 (1922-2009)  
 I. Session  
 II. Reading  
 III. Recital  
 IV. Lecture  
 Brendan Fitzgerald, percussion and conductor  
 Michael McNeill, piano • Zane Merritt, electric  
 guitar • Evan Courtin, violin • TJ Borden, cello

\*premiere performance

– Intermission –

Please silence all electronic devices.

## About the Muriel Wolf and Albert Steger Endowment

This concert has been made possible by the generous endowment provided by the estate of Muriel Hebert Wolf and Albert Steger. It was their wish that the funds be used to produce concerts of music from Buffalo. This is the first concert to occur using those funds.

Muriel Hebert Wolf (1925-2009) joined the music faculty at the University at Buffalo in 1965. She taught voice and opera studies at UB until her retirement in 1993. Muriel was married to composer and flutist Anton Wolf (1914-1989), who was a member of the music faculty at Buffalo State College.

Muriel was a graduate of New England Conservatory with an undergraduate degree in vocal performance and a master's degree in musicology. She was also a Fulbright Fellow at the Max Reinhardt Seminar, the school of drama at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. Prior to coming to UB she served as soprano-in-residence at Brandeis University and as a member of the music faculty at Indiana University.

While at UB Muriel served as Director of Opera from 1966-1979 during which time she produced and directed more than 30 major productions, including several with the Buffalo Philharmonic. She founded MusicTheater Advocates in 1974 to promote awareness of opera in Buffalo.

Albert Steger was bassist with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra 1951-1982. He also served as orchestra librarian for the symphony 1966-1982. Albert was born in Pennsylvania but moved to Detroit where he studied bass with his uncle, Arthur Luck, founder of Luck's Music Library. Albert was a skilled music copyist partly as a result of his duties as orchestra librarian and partly through his contact with his uncle Arthur's music publishing business. Albert's friendship with Anton Wolf dated from their days together as members of the Works Projects Administration's (WPA) Detroit Civic Orchestra. After Anton died in 1989, Muriel sought assistance from Albert (by then a widower) to organize Anton's scores and papers. Albert applied all of his copyist's skills to create fresh working copies of much of Anton's compositional output.

John Bewley  
Associate Librarian/Archivist  
UB Music Library

Wooden Cities would like to thank the following people and organizations for making this and other projects possible.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Wolf and Steger Families  | Bob Berkman, pianist and piano roll expert  |
| John Bewley, Associate Librarian, UB Music Library  | David Saul, Owner/Operator, Precision Music Rolls                                 |
| Nancy Nuzzo, Former Director, UB Music Library, and all the Music Library staff                   | Gary Shipe, piano technician  |
| Phil Rehard, Concert Manager  | Charles Hannon  |
| Chris Jacobs, Director of Technology  | Megan Mett , photography  |
| Sharon Mok, Piano technician  | Matt Sargent, composer  |
| Tom Kolor, Assistant Professor of Percussion, Alexander Chimienti and the Percussion Studio at UB | Griffin Schultz, media editing  |
| Jon Nelson, Professor of Music, Director of Undergraduate Studies                                 | Canisius High School  |
| Eric Huebner, Assistant Professor of Piano  | Pat Donovan, Editor, UB Reporter  |
| Jeffrey Stadelman, Associate Professor of Composition   | Jan Jezioro, Artvoice contributor   |
|   | Jim Moscato, Director of Environmental Services at Buffalo General Medical Center |

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## Program Notes

*Sonatine* (1963)  
Anton Wolf (1914-1989)

Anton Wolf's *Sonatine* puts modern harmonic and melodic ideas into a quasi-Classical three-movement form. The first movement is indeed a miniature sonata, presenting two contrasting groups of ideas — the first alternating between a playful, skittering line and a more static melody; the second is a sparer melody with a simple rhythmic accompaniment. The sections are linked by a slow chorale; the second group closes with melodic fragments punctuated by silence. Wolf focuses on these latter ideas in the development, returning to the first theme group only at the recapitulation. The ominous chorale theme closes the movement.

The second movement presents a charming, lyrical melody, which breaks off into a stark, *marcato* theme. The third movement, *Toccata*, is a driving, rhythmic etude that occasionally yields to a fragmented melody recalling themes from the first movement before resuming its headlong sprint. The brief, closing *fantasie* brings us back to the opening of the first movement.

notes by Michael McNeill

***Looking at/Towards/On Top of: Mount Ağrı*** (2013)

Esin Gündüz (b. 1983)

Commissioned by Friends of Vienna, 2013.

In 3 movements, as the title suggests:

1. “Efsanevi dağ Ağrı’ya, var gücümle baktım...”

“I looked at the legendary Mount Ağrı, with all my might...”

Alexander S. Pushkin, (1799-1837)

Russian Author of the Romantic Era

2. “Atatürk bir dağa benzer, yaklaştıkça gözünüzde büyür...”

“Atatürk, he resembles a big mountain, as you get closer becomes bigger and bigger in your eyes...”

Turgut Özakman, (1930-2013)

Turkish Author, Bureaucrat, Attorney

3. “En yüce dağlara tırmanan, güler bütün acıklı oyunlara, acıklı gerçeklere...”

“One who climbs the highest mountains laughs at all those tragic games, tragic reality...”

from “Thus Spoke Zarathustra”

Friedrich W. Nietzsche (1844-1900)

German Philologist, Philosopher, Cultural Critic, Poet

*“Looking at / Towards / On Top Of: Mount Ağrı”*

*Isn’t it a big change of perspective that one experiences  
when she/he “climbs the highest mountains,”  
or feels, when once IS on the top of a mountain?*

*notes by Esin Gündüz*

***Heptagram*** (2014)

Michael McNeill (b. 1982)

The text of “Heptagram” comes from Charles Eisenstein’s 2011 book *Sacred Economics*: “...the heart does not pump blood through the system, but rather receives it, listens to it, and sends it back out again. It is an organ of perception.” The members of the ensemble alternately speak segments of this text and perform seven segments of notated music, sometimes together and sometimes moving independently, guided by the conductor. Color notation further modulates both the text and the notation. I hope that each performance of “Heptagram” will yield a variety of sounds and tonal colors, and that successive performances will yield a variety of formal structures and progressions.

*notes by Michael McNeill*

***Korals 8 & 12*** (2009)

Jeffrey Stadelman (b. 1959)

Jeffrey Stadelman is Associate Professor of Music and Chair of the Music Department at the State University of New York at Buffalo, teaching composition and contemporary music. Originally from Wisconsin, Stadelman studied composition at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with Stephen Dembski before receiving his Ph.D. in Music from Harvard University under the instruction of Donald Martino, Milton Babbitt, Earl Kim, and Stephen Mosko.

Of *Koral*, Stadelman writes:

Up to this point the only program note I’ve ever written or distributed regarding *Koral* is a very short two-liner that says, factually, when I started it, its forces (any and all), and how many pieces I forecast will be included when complete:

“In 2007, I sketched a very large musical structure to be built up over many years out of small, disparate parts. This project, *Koral* (pronounced “coral”), will in the end include hundreds of pieces, to be played individually or in groups.”

I’ve kept the “form” of the entire project deliberately vague, partly because it is “open” in the sense of allowing a large number of different performance arrangements/constellations; and partly because it is as yet undetermined, to be fixed by life events, opportunities, and whim.

But I can add that back in 2006/07 I was inspired by my sometime favorite novelist, Thomas Bernhard, and the artist characters from a number of his books, including especially *Correction*, *Concrete*, and *The Lime Works*. All of these novels prominently feature self-deluded, self-determined “geniuses” of the most (darkly) hilariously obsessive and neurotic sort. Roithamer in particular, from *Correction*, has left at his death a vast quantity of fragmentary “research,” plans, calculations, theories, aphorisms on scraps of paper, taped to walls etc. It has fallen to the narrator the impossible, laughable and absurd task to attempt to make sense of the fragments and piece them together into some sort of whole.

I also recall that photos of the wondrously chaotic, layered, filthy studio that the artist Francis Bacon left at his death were a definite inspiration for me, toward a work of hyperslovenly art in the tradition of say Beuys or Kienholz.

I should add that the two *Wooden Cities* premieres—*Koral 8* and *Koral 12*—are songs that feature fragmentary texts. In the first case, a rather pretentious “law” scribbled in 1910 by my favorite aphorist, Paul Valery, about “dry” vs. “wet” artistic styles; and in the second, one sentence from John Ashbery’s

poem, "Ignorance of the Law is No Excuse," that I took to be its most beautiful and allusive. I "cut" the rest.

## Texts

### *Koral 8*

Paul Valery, from *Analects*

Like an incorruptible mummy, a "dry" style lasts for ages, while other styles, bulging with fat replete with imagery rots among the jewels. Then years later some tiaras, a few rings, are salvaged from their tombs.

### *Koral 12*

John Ashbery, "Ignorance of the Law Is No Excuse"

(The lines of the poem used in *Koral 12* are italicized.)

We were warned about spiders, and the occasional famine.  
We drove downtown to see our neighbors. None of them were home.  
We nestled in yards the municipality had created,  
reminisced about other, different places—  
but were they? Hadn't we known it all before?

*In vineyards where the bee's hymn drowns the monotony,  
we slept for peace, joining in the great run.  
He came up to me.  
It was all as it had been,  
except for the weight of the present,  
that scuttled the pact we made with heaven.  
In truth there was no cause for rejoicing,  
nor need to turn around, either.  
We were lost just by standing,  
listening to the hum of wires overhead.*

We mourned that meritocracy which, wildly vibrant,  
had kept food on the table and milk in the glass.  
In skid-row, slapdash style  
we walked back to the original rock crystal he had become,  
all concern, all fears for us.  
We went down gently  
to the bottom-most step. There you can grieve and breathe,  
rinse your possessions in the chilly spring.

Only beware the bears and wolves that frequent it  
and the shadow that comes when you expect dawn.

*notes by Megan Kyle*

***with.against*** (2014)

for Wooden Cities

Brendan Fitzgerald (b. 1986)

*with.against* is a piece that places two individuals in the same musical space. One player is seeking to sound a six note chord activated by electronics, while the other is given no such goal. Both players may activate one of the six pitches by performing a musical snippet, however, these small ideas may also deactivate the entire chord, forcing the goal-oriented player back to the beginning of the piece. A computer selects by chance which musical ideas will activate the chord tones at what time.

A special thanks to Ethan Hayden and Matt Sargent for their programming and technical guidance.

*notes by Brendan Fitzgerald*

***An Avalanche*** (1968)

Lejaren Hiller (1924-1994)

Although Lejaren Hiller began composing at an early age (he had a particular passion for big-band jazz), his first career was as a chemist, with composition initially relegated to the side. Hiller studied chemistry at Princeton, earning his PhD in 1947, meanwhile studying composition with Milton Babbitt and Roger Sessions. After graduation he began work as a research chemist with the DuPont Company in Virginia, but continued to compose. Hiller left the corporate world five years later in favor of academia, becoming a chemistry research associate at the University of Illinois. Working with the university's room-sized ILLIAC computer led to his pioneering use of computers in musical composition. In 1958, Hiller earned an MM in music composition from the University of Illinois and moved into the music department, establishing an electronic music studio there.

Hiller was not immediately accepted into the music world, considered an interloper by some who were skeptical of his background as a scientist. His first commissions were instead from the world of theater. When he was finally welcomed into the music scene, it was through a multimedia collaboration with John Cage called HPSCHD (1968), which involved seven harpsichords and 59 amplified channels of audio playback. It has been suggested that Hiller's theatricality was influenced by his father, Lejaren Hiller, Sr., who was famous for his photographs of meticulously staged tableaux-vivants and is often described as more of a director than a photographer.

Lejaren Hiller composed *An Avalanche* in the same year that he came to Buffalo to co-direct the Center of the Creative and Performing Arts with Lukas Foss, replacing Allen Sapp who had recently resigned. Its Buffalo premiere was on

November 3, 1968, the same concert on which Foss's *Paradigm*, also on our program today, had its Buffalo premiere. *An Avalanche* is a music-theatre piece for "pitchman, prima donna, percussion, player piano, and pre-recorded playback." It is indeed, as the title suggests, a bombardment—each character, seemingly unaware of the others, shouts, belts, or smacks out their chaotic parts. Meanwhile, the addition of props and supporting characters—stage hands who read Batman comics and fall asleep, costumieres who hover around the prima donna and assist in her myriad costume changes, and an audio technician fussing over his equipment—adds to the spectacle. Through this sensory onslaught, the piece delivers a sharp jab at the entire enterprise of high-brow musical culture, from the opera to the academy to cultural snobbery.

It seems fitting to perform this theatrical piece, with its chaotic quotations of opera arias, as a tribute to Muriel Wolf, who was so monumental in the Buffalo opera scene.

*notes by Megan Kyle*

***And the Bombers Went Home* (1943)**  
Allen Sapp (1922-1999)

Allen Sapp, who once chaired the music department at SUNY Buffalo and co-founded the Center of the Creative and Performing Arts with Lukas Foss, was a key force in establishing Buffalo as a center of contemporary music. Sapp also attained high stature as a cryptanalyst, serving in the army during World War II and after. He used his own musical compositions as examples of code in his three-volume training manual, *Censorship Cryptanalysis*.

*And the Bombers Went Home*, for violin and piano, was composed shortly before Sapp enlisted in the army, just after graduating from Harvard in 1942. The piece, which combines serial technique with a modal sensibility, is sweetly lyrical with moments of agitation.

*notes by Megan Kyle*

***Burning City* (2014)**  
Zane Merritt (b. 1985)

The piece that I composed ended up sounding quite incendiary and active. Given this musical contextualization and the fact that the group is named "Wooden Cities," I found it only natural that this sensibility would set my city (as a part of the group) on fire, given that it is made of wood, granting me the title. This is, however, a fire of spirit, energy, and playful pandemonium (which I think is a good characterization of Wooden Cities) as opposed to a fire of death, destruction, and chaos.

*notes by Zane Merritt*

***Occasionally, music* (2013)**  
Nathan Heidelberger (b. 1987)

*Occasionally, music* is a set of three "crab canons"—in each movement the cello plays the same notes as the violin in reverse. The piece draws upon a spare, dramatically reduced palette, consisting mostly of single, unadorned pitches. The notes alternate and overlap with each other to create one line shared between the two instruments. The sounding result occupies an ambiguous position, not quite a unified melody, but not quite a series of harmonies either. As the line and its own mirror image drift past each other in canon, they sometimes align to produce certain iconic musical fragments—a major triad, a minor third, a stack of fifths, etc. These culturally resonant sound objects provoke moments of fleeting recognition; occasionally it is as if some other piece of music has come into view.

*notes by Nathan Heidelberger*

***Paradigm* (1968)**  
Lukas Foss (1922-2009)

Lukas Foss was one of Buffalo's most important musical figures. An internationally respected composer and conductor, he directed the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra in the 1960s and founded the Center of the Creative and Performing Arts at SUNY Buffalo, co-directing it with first Allen Sapp and then Lejaren Hiller. While his early compositions were traditional, often described as neo-classical, *Paradigm*, written during his time with the BPO, comes after he began experimenting with partially improvised material. The performers are given various types of materials, notes as well as text, which are chosen and executed through aleatoric processes. In a lecture that makes up a portion of the text used in the 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...Show me dangerous music." For Foss, even improvisation and chance music, deployed in ways that minimize risk and give the musicians only superficial license to affect the result at the moment of performance, are safe.

A performance of *Paradigm* feels anything but safe, reeling from one moment to the next—shouting voices and wailing instruments give way to whispers, only to explode again. The dense counterpoint in the faster sections consists of hundreds of miniature ascents and descents, which combine into tightly-packed swarms of comic ferocity. But for all this noisy virtuosity there is a playfulness and humor that pokes holes in Foss's lecture. We are led to question what is sense and what is nonsense, where the lecture ends and the joke begins.

*notes by Megan Kyle*

About WOODEN CITIES:

The Wooden Cities ensemble seeks to increase the performance and awareness of contemporary classical music in 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 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

**A Two-Part (B)uffalo (A)rt (D)ispensary  
Interactive Art Event Featuring Wooden Cities**

Western New York Book Arts Center

*Part 1:* Saturday, February 8

7:00-9:00pm

*Part 2:* Saturday, April 26

7:00-9:00pm

free admission

**Chain Gang Citizens**

Pausa Art House

Thursday, February 13

8:00pm

\$7 general/\$5 students

***[un] sound spaces***

Unity Gallery

closing reception of photographer Megan Mett 's  
exhibition (January 7 – February 26)

Friday, February 21

7:00-10:00pm, 8:00pm performance

free admission

**Yoko Ono Fanclub**

UB Art Gallery

Saturday, March 29

7:30pm

free admission

**An Excess of Voice:**

**Steve McCaffery & Wooden Cities**

Pausa Art House

Saturday, April 19

8:00pm

\$7 general/\$5 students

STAY IN TOUCH:

Email: [info@woodencities.org](mailto:info@woodencities.org)

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