

with Eastman himself across Europe, the piece was not scored fully and somewhat lost to time. With assistance from Paul Pinto and the Creative Associates percussionist, Jan Williams, Wooden Cities members Ethan Hayden and Katie Weissman reconstructed the work to include improvisation, cues, and ensemble interaction original to the composition.

Wooden Cities would like to thank Dr. Armenio Suzano, the Greatbatch School of Music, its faculty, staff and students, and Houghton College for their support in presenting this concert and the Artist Series.

ANTIPHONAL MEDITATION

for Two Groups of Singers or Instrumentalists

A group of singers or instrumentalists divides evenly into two groups that face each other at some distance.

Group A begins, spontaneously or on cue, to make a sound together.

Group B listens and responds by trying to imitate or echo the sound made by group A.

Then group B initiates a sound
Group A responds.

Sounds should last only as long as a breath. Silences between responses may be of any length, but must be sensed or cued by the group as a whole.

Response might begin slowly, with the initiating group's sound carefully considered by the other before responding or immediate responses might be achieved.

The groups might gradually move toward each other and end the meditation as one group. There is no leader, just consensual activity.

San Diego, California
October 28, 1979

Wooden Cities

Friday, February 10, 2017

7:30pm

in the beginning was the word

Ethan Hayden
(b. 1984)

after the poem by Brion Gysin
(1916-1986)

Brendan Fitzgerald, guitar • Nicholas Emmanuel, piano
Ethan Hayden, speaker
Evan Courtin, violin • Katie Weissman, cello

In Memoriam Brooks Frederickson

Zane Merritt
(b. 1985)

Megan Kyle, oboe • Ethan Hayden, trombone
Brendan Fitzgerald, percussion • Nicholas Emmanuel, piano
Nathan Heidelberg, melodica • Esin Gunduz, soprano
Evan Courtin, violin • Katie Weissman, cello

Composition No. 358

Anthony Braxton
(b. 1945)

- I.
- II.
- III.
- IV.

Megan Kyle, oboe • Nathan Heidelberg, melodica
Katie Weissman, cello

Cobra

John Zorn
(b. 1953)

Brendan Fitzgerald, prompter • Megan Kyle, oboe
Ethan Hayden, trombone • Nicholas Emmanuel, piano
Nathan Heidelberg, melodica • Esin Gunduz, soprano
Evan Courtin, violin • Katie Weissman, cello

- Intermission -

"Time May" from *Tombstones* Michael Pisaro
(b. 1961)

Megan Kyle, oboe • Nicholas Emmanuel, piano
Esin Gunduz, soprano • Evan Courtin, violin

Antiphonal Meditation Pauline Oliveros
(1932-2016)

full ensemble and audience

Stay On It Julius Eastman
(1940-1990)

Megan Kyle, oboe • Ethan Hayden, trombone
Brendan Fitzgerald, percussion • Nicholas Emmanuel, piano
Nathan Heidelberger, melodica • Esin Gunduz, soprano
Evan Courtin, violin • Katie Weissman, cello

Note on the program:

Improvisation brought Wooden Cities together as an ensemble in 2011, and as a theme it brings together the program tonight. Each of the pieces on tonight's concert, with the exception of the first piece, involves improvisation in some form. The amount of agency and types of options given to the performers varies widely, but in each there is an element of indeterminacy, with the music being driven in key ways by the performers' choices.

In terms of performer agency, Ethan Hayden's *in the beginning was the word* stands opposite the rest of the program. The piece is fully composed, and its composition is dictated by a computer algorithm—yet it's an interesting example of the transcendence that can result from such tight restrictions. Brion Gysin's 1962 poem of the same name used a computer program to shuffle the words in the title in such a way that new, peripheral, or contradictory meanings were produced. Hayden's music uses the same permutation algorithm to generate a musical environment for the poem's recitation. The music attempts to capture both the mantric and playful qualities of the text, while also emphasizing the more objective aspects of its construction. The piece was composed in the spring of 2014 for Wooden Cities.

In Memoriam Brooks Frederickson by Zane Merritt (a tongue-in-cheek title referring to a friend of the composer who is in fact alive) is written for eight

unspecified instruments. Each player is assigned a number, and follows instructions that include dynamic changes and three modes of playing: short hits, repetitive figures, and free improvisation. In this way, Merritt crafts a specific trajectory in his piece while preserving the excitement and spontaneity of improvised performance.

Anthony Braxton developed a language of graphic music that involves shapes, colors, and alternative forms of notation. In the selections from Composition No. 358, the composer uses a staff to suggest register, some traditional dynamic indications, bar lines, and a score format that reads from left to right. Less conventionally, Braxton uses color to denote emotion, lines for cues, and filled-in and empty note heads for duration. While elements of improvisation are key to the work, the notation must be adhered to for an accurate interpretation.

John Zorn's *Cobra* is the most well-known of his game pieces—pieces in which a group of musicians improvise according to a structured set of rules. Musicians follow instructions from the prompter in the form of cards that cue specific actions or modes of performing, but may also request particular cards through hand gestures. Or, they may rebel completely against the prompter by putting on a hat to become a "guerrilla" or calling on two other musicians to join them in a "guerrilla squad," which may then temporarily take control from the prompter (the guerrilla squad's reign is ended when a non-guerrilla musician gives a specified gesture in view of the prompter, but without being caught by any of the guerrilla squad).

In Michael Pisaro's ghostly 2012 collection *Tombstones*, the composer takes single lines out of their original popular song contexts and stretches them into otherworldly soundscapes. "Time May" takes the line "Time may change me, but I can't trace time" from David Bowie's "Changes." It is scored for voice, one decaying instrument (i.e. piano, guitar, harp, etc.), and two sustaining instruments. The instruments surround the voice in a kind of halo, with their decisions informed by the timing of her changes.

Pauline Oliveros, who recently passed away in late 2016, is known for her "deep listening" philosophy, in which performers aspire to enhance their auditory perceptions through meditative improvisations. We ask the audience to join us in tonight's performance of *Antiphonal Meditation*, which is printed on the back of this program.

Kyle Gann of the Village Voice noted that Julius Eastman's *Stay On It* was one of the first minimalist works to show the influence of pop music. Performed extensively by the University at Buffalo's Creative Associates