

Ben Opie
5877 Solway St, Pittsburgh PA 15217
412-422-6743 (H) 412-310-8042 (C)
opek.music@verizon.net; benopie@andrew.cmu.edu
<https://www.facebook.com/benopie> <https://twitter.com/benopiemusic>
<https://www.instagram.com/benopiemusic/> <https://benopie.com/>

Curriculum Vitae and Performance History

Degrees earned

Duquesne University: Bachelor of Science in Music Education (cum laude), Spring 1987
Duquesne University: Master of Music in Music Technology, Spring 2010

Relevant Employment History

Pittsburgh High School for the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA): September 1999-June 2008

Adjunct music faculty, music technology; courses taught in creative technology and composition, jazz ensemble, avant-garde music; founder of student new music/avant-garde ensemble CAPA Antithesis

Carnegie Mellon University: Summer 2005-present.

Adjunct faculty, music technology; pre-college, undergraduate, and graduate courses taught: Introduction to Music Technology, Electronic and Computer Music, Finale Scoring, Technology in the Music Classroom

Individual Awards

Pittsburgh Cultural Trust: *Creative Achievement Award*, emerging artist, 1996.

The Pittsburgh Foundation: *Investing in Professional Artists: Creative Development Grant*, 2013

This grant supported the premiere performance of Ben Opie's *Concerto for Orchestra*, a ten-movement symphonic suite for sixteen piece jazz orchestra plus conductor. The work was premiered May 2, 2014.

Musical Ensembles and Projects (as Leader or Co-leader)

Morphic Resonance: trio: 1983-1987. Founder, reeds. Acoustic free improvisation and open composition; quintet: 1990-1993. Electro-acoustic improvisation.

Discography: *Suite 601* cassette

Promises, Promises cassette compilation

(Y)Earbook Vol. 2 CD compilation (Rastascan)

Canéa: 1986-1988. Reeds, composition.

Compositions and improvisations by woodwind trio. Performances included an appearance at the Mattress Factory.

Water Shed 5tet: 1990-2000; founder, reeds, theremin, primary composer/arranger. Electric instrumental jazz/rock/avant-garde fusion quintet. In addition to regional performances, the group also toured the East Coast and California. Selected performances included:

- Annual appearances at the Three Rivers Arts Festival
- Performance at the Carnegie International
- Guest appearance on *On Q* television program
- Collaborative performances with San Francisco Bay area musicians, and the Billy Tipton Memorial Saxophone Quartet

Articles and reviews appeared in *Alternative Press*, *Billboard*, *Option*, *Cadence*, among others.

Discography: *Sales and Service* 7" record (Pop Bus)

Duck Bill Hammer CD (Pop Bus)

"Brainville"/"The Throes" 7" record (Pop Bus)

Litmus Test cassette compilation (SSS)

Wavelength Infinity Sun Ra tribute double-CD compilation (Rastascan)

Blue Plate Tectonics CD (Rastascan)

Circuit Breaker CD (Tautology)

Live at Mr. Small's CD (OMP)

OPEK: 2000-present; founder, alto saxophone, electronics, composer/arranger.

Sun Ra-inspired big band. Performances have included:

- Three Rivers Arts Festival
- Warhol Museum Sound Series and "Night of Sun Ra",
- Pittsburgh Filmmakers Film Kitchen
- Carnegie Museum of Art
- New Hazlett Theater "Mostly Miles" and "Mostly Sun Ra" concerts
- James Street Gastropub, Charles Mingus Celebration weekend

Thoth Trio: 2003-present; reeds and composer.

Billed as "intense acoustic jazz". Appearances have included performances at the Three Rivers Arts Festival, the Mattress Factory, the Toonseum, and a live soundtrack performance at the Warhol Museum for the silent film *Jazzmania*, live soundtrack performance to three Buster Keaton shorts for the Hollywood Theater (Dormont),

Discography: *Apropos of Nothing* CD (DHP)

Thoth Speaks CD (OMP)

Were You There? Vol. 3 CD (OMP)

Dust & Feathers: 2004-2009; reeds and electronics.

Improvisation ensemble with sound text. Appearances included a performance of Gino Robair's anti-opera *I, Norton* at the Warhol Museum and the New Hazlett Theater, October 2006.

Sound/Unsound Trio: 2008-present; reeds, electronics, composer.

Modular compositions and improvisations. Performances have included an appearance at the Pittsburgh Children's Museum, playing live soundtracks to silent films by Buster Keaton and Georges Méliès, and the *Silents, Please* series at the Hollywood Theater in Dormont, PA.

Discography: *15728* CD (self-released)

Flexure: 2011-2016; alto saxophone, electronics, composer.

Electric instrumental ensemble, inspired by 1970's Miles Davis, and the compositional strategies of Anthony Braxton. First performance was October 7, 2011. Flexure staged a residency concert and recording sessions at the New Hazlett Theater, Jan. 3-5, 2013.

Discography: *Were You There? Vol. 1 & 2* (OMP) [small run CDR copies of live performances in hand-rendered packaging]

Insert Title Here (OMP) LP

Braxton Plays Pittsburgh Plays Braxton: May 2008.

Project leader and musical participant in mini-festival of collaborations and presentations involving Anthony Braxton. Presented in cooperation with the New Hazlett Theater and funded by a RADWorks RAD Renaissance Grant, a Seed Award from The Sprout Fund, and the A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation, with assistance from Manchester Craftsmen's Guild and the National Aviary.

Concerts:

Braxton Septet at the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild

Anthony Braxton conducting a fifteen-piece orchestra of local players, with the high school group CAPA Antithesis opening

Two collaborative performances with the Syrinx Ensemble at the National Aviary

There were also several rehearsals, a high school workshop, and a studio recording session that week. Recordings from the festival:

Anthony Braxton/Ben Opie: *Duets (Pittsburgh) 2008* double CD (OMP)

Anthony Braxton and the Three Rivers Tri-Centric Ensemble: *Ensemble (Pittsburgh) 2008* LP + CDR (SSS)

Anthony Braxton Septet: *Septet (Pittsburgh) 2008* digital download from tricentricfoundation.org (mixed and produced by Ben Opie)

Space Exchange: January 2012-May 2016 (to be continued?).

Cooperative musicians' group running free Tuesday night concert series, Thunderbird Café, Pittsburgh.

Live at Kingfly: Feb. 2019 on. Curator of live jazz series.

Among Ben's onstage collaborations as an improviser: Lori Freedman (Montreal), Andrew Voigt, John Shuirba, Splatter Trio, The Molecules (San Francisco), Bhub Rainey, Debris (Boston), David Boykins, Spider Trio (Chicago), Shaking Ray Levis (North Carolina), John Oswald and David Prentice (Toronto), Dominic Duval and Jackson Krall, Lindsey Horner Quartet (New York City), Gianni Gebbia (Milan), Peter Kowald (Germany). He has also appeared with Little Anthony and the Imperials, and Lou Christie.

Ben has performed duet and trio performances with Pittsburgh musicians including Jeff Beck (bass), David Bernabo (piano, electronics), Jeff Grubbs (bass), Ben Harris (violin), Jay Matula (drums), Eden McNutt (voice), Paul Thompson (bass), David Throckmorton (drums), Matt Wellins (electronics), Josh Wulff (guitar).

Ben has also played many solo performances, primarily on alto saxophone, as well as tenor saxophone, contrabass clarinet, B flat clarinet, and laptop.

Participating Ensembles and Projects

Coal Train: 1998-2001; clarinet and composer.

Acoustic string band with clarinet.

Discography: *Coal Train's Pain-Killing Mystery Salve* CD
WYEP Live and Direct double-CD compilation

HiTEC: 2007-2010; reeds, electronics, composition.

Experimental orchestra. CDR and DVDR documentation available from organizer tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE. Appearances included performances at the New Hazlett Theater and the Visionary Arts Festival.

Systems Management (Encyclopedia Destructiva) DVD/CD/book

Syrinx Ensemble: 2004-2011. Reeds, electronics.

Environmental improvisations with live birds. Appearances have included performances at the National Aviary and the Central Park Zoo/

Discography: Michael Pestel, *Feathered Jewels Gala* CD

Quantum Theatre: *Kafka's Chimp*, January 2004.

Soprano saxophonist in US premiere of chamber opera by John Metcalf and Mark Morris.

Opera Theater of Pittsburgh: *RedDust*, May 2007.

Tenor saxophonist in world premiere of opera by Mat Rosenblum.

Attack Theatre: *Dead End*, November 2008.

Reeds, theremin, bandleader for dance performance.

In Defense of Gravity, December 2017. Composer, arranger, reeds.

Nina Sarnelle: *The Body in Ten Parts*, December 2010.
Contribution of two musical works to multimedia dance performance.

Tri-Centric Orchestra: December 2010.
Invited participant in sightreading and improvisation workshops with full orchestra led by Anthony Braxton.

BEBOP and **KIDBOP:** Summer 2011. Series of site-based performances and workshops at the National Avari and Mattress Factory. Led by Michael Pestel, in collaboration with Taketeru Kudo (butoh), Caterina De Re (voice), tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE (sounds), Matt Wellins (audio).

Silk Sound: Asian/American jazz fusion project, debut concert Feb. 2014.
Discography: *Sun Gate* CD

Afro Yaqui Music Collective: 2016-present. Saxophones and compositions. Included in Ben Barson's opera *Mirror Butterfly* <http://afroyaquimusiccollective.com/mirror-butterfly>

PEARLARTS: *Abbey Lincoln: In the Red*, May 2017.
Reeds, arranger.

Jesse Stiles: *U+1F50C U+1F30B U+1F649 (for Ben Opie)*, Sept. 2018.
Premiere performance of work for instrumentalist and laptop.

Wang Lu: *Manifold*, Sept. 2018.
Baritone saxophone in premiere performance of work for chamber orchestra and digital projection, for the Pittsburgh International Festival of Firsts.

Commissions

Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble: *Blue Four*, premiered January 1999.
Work for ensemble with jazz trio; soloist, commissioned by David Stock and the PNME.

First Night Pittsburgh: *Urban Aquarium* soundtrack, December 1999.
Electronic and acoustic recordings for visual installation by Carolyn Speranza,

Woodland Hills School District: untitled work for string and percussion orchestra,
Spring 2000.

CAPA Woodwind Trio: *Minya* and *Andante*, Spring 2002.

Flexure: Residency at the New Hazlett; underwritten by an anonymous donation for the creation of new works, Jan. 3-5 2013.

Other recordings by or including Ben Opie

Ben Opie: *RRR-100* all lock-groove 7" compilation (RRRecords)
 Cones and Cylinders cassette
 WRCT 7" compilation record
 Urban Aquarium Soundtrack CD
ATS: "Runaway Barge"/"Anti-Christ" 7" record
Crawlin' Low Band: *Tales of a Tub* CD
Jim Dispirito: *Big Silence* CD
Daryl Fleming and the Public Domain: *The Fable of the Bees* CD
Lindsey Horner: *Don't Count on Glory* CD (Cadence Jazz)
Heather Kropf: *Sky* CD
Instant Siberia: *Nine Trait Basis* cassette
tENTATIVELY, a cONVENIENCE: *Lost in Translation* cassette
 Triple-S Variety 'Show' - Volume 2 cassette
 Volunteers Collective XXVI cassette
Theremin Duo: *WRCT – A Compilation* CD
Brad Yoder: *Best Sunday Heart* CD
Ben Opie: *Shu*, on *MM76* compilation CD
Microwaves: "Antibody" on *Via Weightlessness* (LP/CD)
 Video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmr0EgmFptw>
Brown Angel: "See That I Am Scourged" on *Shutout* (CD/LP)
 Video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeHlune3JkE>

Recent Online Press Materials

<http://www.pghcitypaper.com/pittsburgh/ben-opie-premieres-concerto-for-orkestra-his-first-long-form-composition/Content?oid=1748045>

<http://www.post-gazette.com/ae/music/2014/04/30/Avant-jazz-player-unveiling-major-work/stories/201404300049>

<http://triblive.com/aande/music/5924722-74/opie-ben-concerto#axzz3G3rlwb8z>

<http://www.pghcitypaper.com/pittsburgh/ben-opies-flexure-takes-up-residence-at-the-new-hazlett-at-least-for-a-few-days/Content?oid=1604649>

<http://www.pghcitypaper.com/pittsburgh/the-return-of-local-silent-shorts-with-live-music/Content?oid=1592063>

<http://www.pghcitypaper.com/pittsburgh/space-exchange-gives-some-local-musicians-a-weekly-workout/Content?oid=1519919>

<http://www.pghcitypaper.com/pittsburgh/on-the-record-with-ben-opie/Content?oid=1458253>

<http://www.pghcitypaper.com/pittsburgh/contemporary-composer-anthony-braxton-visits-for-a-weekend-of-performances/Content?oid=1340266>

<http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/ae/music/five-local-musicians-occupy-thunderbird-for-space-exchange-a-not-just-jazz-series-226276/>

<http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/ae/music/local-saxophonist-ben-opie-celebrates-collaboration-with-composer-anthony-braxton-282730/>

<http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/ae/uncategorized/jazz-master-anthony-braxton-rolls-to-jam-with-local-players-and-birds-395949/>

<http://triblive.com/aande/music/3201838-74/opie-band-flexure#axzz2ITrIWbLt>

<http://triblive.com/aande/1848485-74/music-says-davis-opie-band-mostly-concert-hazlett-opek-ben#axzz2ITrIWbLt>

http://triblive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/ae/music/s_718048.html#axzz2ITrIWbLt