

# Brian Wilbur Grundstrom

## Biography

A composer equally accustomed to writing for orchestra, opera, film, theater, chorus, piano and chamber ensembles, Brian Wilbur Grundstrom has a strong affinity for long melodic lines, distinctive tonal harmonic vocabulary, engaging rhythms, skillfully executed counterpoint, and dramatic imagery.

Audiences take to his compositions immediately, finding in his music traces of Copland and Puccini.

Classically trained in piano as well as music theory from Gettysburg College, he continued orchestration and composition studies with John David Earnest.



Based on Ernest Hemingway's ***For Whom the Bell Tolls***, Grundstrom has written a new lyrical grand opera in two acts, with libretto by David M. Dorsen. After a full concert performance workshop at the Church of the Epiphany in Washington DC on November 20, 2022, the opera's fully staged premiere is scheduled with the International Opera Company of Brasil in Brasilia for two weeks at the end January 2026.

Soprano **Indra Thomas**, one of the foremost Aida's in the world today and a regular at the Metropolitan Opera and other top opera houses, premiered one of the arias from Grundstrom's opera, accompanied by the Rome Symphony Orchestra of Georgia led by Maestro Jeffrey Dokken.

Parma Recordings has recorded the opera's overture with the **London Symphony Orchestra** under the direction of Maestro Miran Vaupotić. Also with Parma Recordings, and conducted by Maestro Erik Ochsner, Grundstrom's CD, **An Orchestral Journey**, was released in 2016 under the Navona Records label with distribution by Naxos.

In addition to the Rome Symphony Orchestra, Grundstrom's orchestral music has been performed by: Orquestra Sinfônica do Teatro Nacional Claudio Santoro (Brasilia, Brazil), La Orquesta Sinfonica De Loja and La Orquesta Sinfónica de Guayaquil (Ecuador), American Contemporary Classical Orchestra, Symphony Orchestra of Northern Virginia, SONOS Chamber Orchestra, North/South Consonance, Shippensburg Festival Orchestra, Trinity Chamber Orchestra, George Washington University Orchestra, NIH Philharmonia, Oconomowoc Chamber Orchestra, Holyoke Civic Symphony, and The Queer Urban Orchestra.

Other ensembles include Sunderman Woodwind Quintet, Chamber Music by Candlelight by Baltimore Symphony Orchestra musicians, CoroAllegro, Colla Voce and The New Jersey Gay Men's Chorus. Grundstrom's compositions have also been featured on the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage.

Grundstrom won **Outstanding Emerging Artist in the 2013 DC Mayor's Arts Awards**, and has received fifteen fellowships from the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities. His awards also include Encore from American Composers Forum, Composers Assistance Program from the American Music Center and ASCAPPLUS from ASCAP. He has received four Peer Awards from Television, Internet & Video Association of DC (TIVA-DC) including a Gold Peer Award for **Children of Zeus** – a 46-minute work for chorus and orchestra commissioned by Maestro Jeffrey Dokken and the Symphony Orchestra of Northern Virginia, CoroAllegro and St Marie's Choral Arts.

A member of ASCAP, Grundstrom attended the ASCAP/NYU Buddy Baker Film Music Workshop. His features include Arc of Light: A Portrait of Anna Campbell Bliss and 2 Minutes Later, in addition to writing music for many short films. His studio includes the latest in technologies, including Vienna Symphonic Library, and he is able to render his orchestral compositions at high professional standards.

SONOS Chamber Orchestra Director Erik E. Ochsen writes "Many audiences cringe at the thought of new music. We had such positive feedback from audiences on how much they enjoyed Grundstrom's work. It is modern, yet tonal."

Maestro Jeffrey Dokken writes about American Reflections for Strings and Harp: "The polyphony of the work is nothing short of genius. Truly. The relationship between the parts is so well written. Having your work on the program was wonderful. It truly embodies the best of American contemporary classical music. It is rhythmically enticing, harmonically satisfying and interesting, makes full use of what a string section can do, shows a broad spectrum of colors without forcing anything, provides several 'eye closingly beautiful moments', and keeps the audience engaged from beat one."



Illustration of young Ernest Hemingway by Lui Rodrigues

**Ernest Hemingway's**

**FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS**

**MUSIC** Brian Wilbur Grundstrom  
**LIBRETTO** David M. Dorsen

*The fight for love and freedom never dies*

International Brazilian Opera Company  
World Premiere 2026 Brasília

A New Opera in Two Acts



iboc

## For Whom the Bell Tolls (2025) 2 hours 37 minutes

**Leads: Soprano, Mezzo, Tenor, Bass** **Comprimario: Soprano, Mezzo, Alto, 3 Tenors, 2 Baritone, 2 Bass**

**Large Orchestration: 2222 4331 timp, perc, harp, strings**

**Medium Orchestration: 1111 4001 timp, perc, harp, strings**

**Small Orchestration: clarinet, piano, string quintet**

- **UPCOMING PREMIERE PRODUCTION**, January 24 to February 8, 2026, Teatro Nacional Claudio Santoro, Brasília - International Brazilian Opera Company  
Piano Vocal Reading with Ruth Bader Ginsberg, July 22, 2015, Washington DC
- **Recording: "German Planes"** Parma Recordings with Maestro Erik Ochsen July 12, 2015
- **Libretto Reading**, Director Robert Barnett, National Opera Center, New York City March 15, 2018
- **Recording: "Maria Meets Robert Jordan"** Summer 2020
- **Recording: "Robert Jordan Doesn't Teach English"** Orquestra Sinfônica do Teatro Nacional Claudio Santoro, Brasília, Brazil, July 20, 2021
- **Interview with creatives** by Christina Scheppelmann, General Director Seattle Opera, July 20, 2021
- **Recording: "Overture"** London Symphony Orchestra, Maestro Miran Vaputić, Parma Recordings Feb 26, 2022
- **Concert: "Overture"** Symphony Orchestra of Northern Virginia, Maestro Jeffrey Dokken, Alexandria VA, March 12, 2022
- **Development Workshop Concert Performance** November 20, 2022, Church of the Epiphany, Washington DC
- **Aria "Will He Love Me"** with Indra Thomas and the Rome Symphony Orchestra, February 11, 2023, Rome GA.



# Orchestra and Chorus

## Children of Zeus (2017) 46:00 min.

3342,4331,timp,perc,hrp,SSAATTBB chorus and strings

### i Hercules (6min)

Cynicism for the Half man half God, the strongest of all men.  
'Hercules & Co.' by Arthur Guierterman

### ii Aphrodite (9min)

Beautiful melodies for the Goddess of Love, beauty, pleasure and procreation. Adapted from the 'Homeric Hymns'

### iii. Ares (10min)

Loud and Militaristic for the God of War and Chaos.  
Adapted from assorted writings on Ares

### iv. Dionysus (11min)

Lush and Mysterious for the God of Wine and Religious Ecstasy.  
'Oedipus at Colonnus'

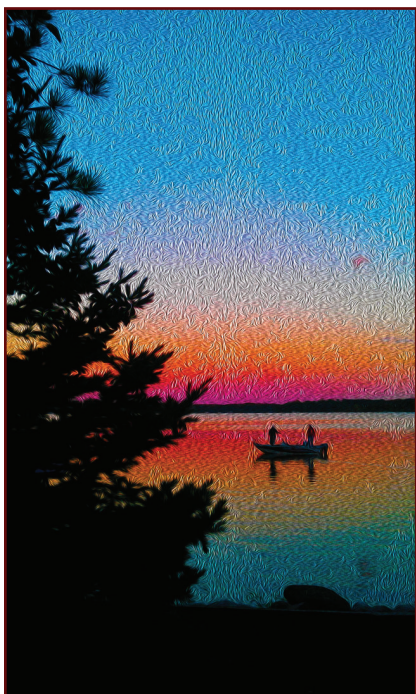
### v. Apollo (9min)

A hypnotic refrain for the God of music, poetry, arts, oracles, archery, medicine, sun, light and knowledge. 'Hymn to Apollo' by John Keats)



CoroAllegro, Delaware Choral Society and the Symphony Orchestra of Northern Virginia, Jeffrey Sean Dokken Music Director:

- April 29, 2017 Baby Grand, Wilmington Delaware;
- June 3, 2017 Masonic Temple in Alexandria, Virginia, and
- June 4, 2017 at Great Mills High School, Great Mills, Maryland with St. Maries Choral Arts
- Rome Symphony Orchestra, Rome, Georgia, Maestro Jeffrey Dokken, March 14, 2020



## Imagine a Day ... in Lake Country (2019) 21:00 min.

Lyrics by Robert Barnett, based on poem by Courtney Bella

2211,2110,timp,perc,hrp, adult chorus SAB, children chorus SAB, strings

- Oconomowoc Chamber Orchestra, Roberta Carpenter Music Director, and Oconomowoc Community Choir, Lynn B Carlstein, Music Director, Oconomowoc Arts Center, Oconomowoc, WI, April 14, 2019

# Orchestra

## Contentment, Poem for Orchestra (1999) 11:20 min.

A lyric poem for orchestra

2222,4331,timp,perc,harp,strings

- Orquestra Sinfônica do Teatro Nacional Claudio Santoro, Maestro Jeffrey Dokken, Teatro Pedro Calmon, Brasilia, Brazil, December 13, 2016
- La Orquesta Sinfonica De Loja, Ecuador, Maestro Jeffrey Dokken, Centro Cultural "Alfredo Mora Reyes, June 29, 2018
- Rome Symphony Orchestra, Maestro Jeffrey Dokken, Betty Anne Rouse Recita Hall, Berry College, Rome GA, November 11, 2023 (right)



## Jubilation! Dance for Orchestra (2000) 8:45 min.

Jubilation! is an exciting dance in 5/4 for full orchestra, climaxing with a big energetic ending.

3333,4331,timp,xyl,vibr,mar,perc,strings

- George Washington University Orchestra, Director Nancia D'Alimonte, Lisner Auditorium, Washington DC, Nov. 19, 2006
- Queer Urban Orchestra, BWG orchestral conducting debut (left), Church of the Holy Apostles, New York City, November 21, 2010
- Lat Orquesta Sinfonica De Loja, Ecuador, Maestro Jeffrey Dokken, Centro Cultural "Alfredo Mora Reyes, June 29, 2018

## American Reflections for Strings and Harp (2009) 12:00 min.

v1 solo, v2 solo, va solo, vc solo, harp, strings

SONOS Chamber Orchestra, Director Erik E. Ochsner

- Good Shepherd Church May 12, 2009, Merkin Concert Hall, NYC May 13 2009, First Baptist Church of White Plains May 16, 2009
- Guayaquil Symphony Orchestra, Teatro Sanchez Aguilar, Ecuador July 10, 2015, Jeffrey Dokken guest conductor)

## Chenonceau, Music for Wind and String Quintets (2013) 12:48 min.

Commissioned by Max Lifchitz and North/South Consonance

Chenonceau, a castle in France on the Loire Valley was inspiration.

Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn, Strings

- North/South Consonance, February 16, 2014, Christ & St. Stephen's Church, 120 West 69th Street, NYC-performed with solo strings
- La Orquesta Sinfonica De Loja, Ecuador, Maestro Jeffrey Dokken, Centro Cultural "Alfredo Mora Reyes, June 29, 2018
- American Contemporary Classical Orchestra, May 22, 2025, Maestro Jeffrey Dokken, Miracle Theatre, 535 8th St SE Washington DC 20003, Maestro Jeffrey Dokken



# Variations on Fanfare for Lake Country by Crawford Gates (2019) 9:00 min.

strings

- Commissioned by Oconomowoc Chamber Orchestra, Roberta Carpenter, Oconomowoc, WI April 14, 2019 & November 3, 2019

**BWG** *Variations on Fanfare for Lake Country by Crawford Gates* Brian Wilbur Grundstrom 8 min. 3/16/2019  
(♩ = 100)

Violin 1  
Violin 2  
Viola  
Cello  
Contrabass

9

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## Suite for Chamber Orchestra

fl,ob,cl,bn,hn,tmp,strings

- NIH Philharmonia, Director Nancia D'Alimonte, St. Elizabeth Catholic Church, Rockville MD, October 20, 2007)
- Symphony Orchestra of Northern Virginia, Director Jeffrey Dokken, James Lee Community Center Theater, Falls Church VA, November 5, 2011

### I. Before the Fall! (2001) 10:45 min.

**Before the Fall!** was almost completed before that defining moment of September 11th, yet there is a dark side to the piece that seems to forebode. Coincidentally, the title also portrays the sense of loss felt as summer fades away and the anticipated dread of the cold and dark as winter approaches. In some sense, the events that shape our world are just as seasonal and uncontrollable as the weather.

- Trinity Chamber Orchestra, Richard Fazio Director, October 15, 2006, St Ann's Church Washington DC

### II. Avalon (2002) 11:30 min.

**Avalon** is the mystical island of healing that King Arthur went to after his battle. This piece represents the slow and necessary healing process following a dramatic event. Mysterious and epic sounding, Avalon has a freestyle beginning with interjecting little motives -- then transitions and builds upon these interjections to a steady and foreboding feel with string pizzicato. The color and character changes subtly as the piece slowly climaxes and relaxes.

### III. Celebration! (2002) 8:30 min.

**Celebration!** deals with the joy and celebration of life that we need to express after coming to terms with the darker side. With all its excitement and vigor, as well as its interesting unexpected turns, **Celebration!** makes a great concert opener!!!

- SONOS Chamber Orchestra, Director Erik E Ochsner, Trinity Church, NYC 2003, February 2003
- Trinity Chamber Orchestra, Richard Fazio Director, Trinity Theater, Washington DC, January 2005
- Festival Chamber Orchestra Series, Artistic Director Dr. Blaine Shover, Shippensburg PA, July 2005
- Holyoke Civic Symphony, Artistic Director David Kidwell, Holyoke MA, May 2008
- Oconomowoc Chamber Orchestra, Roberta Carpenter, Oconomowoc, WI, April 14, 2019





# Theater



## “A Day At The Museum” (2008) 35 min.

Commissioned by The New Zenith Theatre for the New York International Fringe Festival. Written by Robert Barnett and directed by Ed Wierzbicki.

A wordless comedy set to an original orchestral score by Brian Wilbur Grundstrom. A nude woman in a painting looks out at people whose lives intersect while visiting an art museum. A playfully sexy look at love and art.

- Capital Fringe Festival 2011, Washington DC, Director Perry T. Schwartz, BWG Producer



Lyrics by Jon Gann and Andrea King

Book by Jon Gann

Based on a true story as told by Tim Tate

Music and Orchestrations by Brian Wilbur Grundstrom

Music and Lyrics copyright © 2009 by Jon Gann,  
Brian Wilbur Grundstrom & Andrea King

- 2009 Capital Fringe Fringe Festival  
BWG also Music Director of production and Recording Engineer of cast recording.



## Music Director & Orchestrator for Cookin' Up Numbers

Music by Tom Berger, Book & Lyrics by Yvonne Roen

- 2010 Capital Fringe Festival

# Film Music

The Golden Cage of Television (2019) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 Bombshell (2018) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 The Least Among Us (2017) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 Believe Me (2017) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 The Rest of Your Life (2017) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 Winston (2016) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 The Greater Evil (2015) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 Codependence Day (2015) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 Uke & Trust Me (2014) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 Residence Evil (2013) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 Game of Assassins (2013) additional music Evan Evans/The Composers Collective  
 The Writer's Dilemma (2013) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 The Monopoly Club (2013) short Meghan Reynolds  
 The Backseat Driver (2012) short Tragedy Plus Time/Rob Rafferty  
 At Last (2012) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 Nocturnal Agony (2011) feature Nubia Filmworks  
 Arc of Light: A Portrait of Anna Campbell Bliss (2011) feature Cid Collis Walker  
 Touched by a Lawyer (2011) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 Green House (2011) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 Uncertainty Principle (2010) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 Final Etiquette (2011) short Jack Kearney  
 Liability (2010) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 Smithsonian Recruitment Video (2009) short by Sonnett Media Group/Dan Sonnett  
 The Red Wind (2009) short by Stephen L. Carr  
 Number One with a Bullet (2009) short Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 Please Forward (2009) short 48 Hour Film Project 2009 DC Best of Selection Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 Convergence (2007) feature by Zero Point Productions/Gary Wheeler & John Strawbridge  
 Sadie's Waltz (2007) short by Mobius Films/Edward R. Tyndall  
 Deconfliction (2007) short by Mobius Films/Edward R. Tyndall  
 You Pay Your Dues (2007) short (Best of 48 Hour Film Project 2007) by Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 2 Minutes Later (2007) feature by Robert Gaston  
 Milind Soman Made Me Gay (2007) short by Harjant Gill  
 The Pride of the Maasai Mara (2007) short by Sonnett Media Group/Dan Sonnett  
 A Tree Grows in Brooklyn (2007) short by Attey Production/Yetta Myrick  
 Four Seasons (2007) short by Ahreum Kim  
 The Tea Party (2006) short by Attey Production/Yetta Myrick  
 The Mane Attraction (2006) short (National Film Challenge) by Sonnett Media Group/Dan Sonnett  
 Machinations (2006) short (Winner, Best Sci-Fi National Film Challenge) Tohubohu Productions/William R. Coughlan  
 A Date With Dennis (2006) short by Director Taylor Burns  
 Reunion (2006) short by Director Andy Bely

# Chamber Music



## Suite Remembrance (2007)

Clarinet, Bassoon and Piano

- I. Seduction 3:45 min.
- II. Langsyne 0:58 min.
- III. Grander Days 1:23 min.
- IV. Dream Waltz 2:16 min.
- V. Distant Memories 4:36 min.

- Robin Gelman, Angela Murakami, BWG (right) Kennedy Center, November 27, 2007
- Brian David Jones, Ben Williams, Laurie Vivona-Bunn April 16, 2009, George Mason University, VA

## Music II for Wind Quintet (2005) 15:05 min.

Music for Piano Solo II has been orchestrated into a fun lively piece for winds.

**Fl, Ob, Cl, Hn, Bn**

- Trinity Chamber Players, Oakton and Alexandria, VA, June 2005 and professionally recorded by Steve Antosca
- Ensemble A la Carte, The Westchester, Washington DC, July 17, 2006
- Kennedy Center, A la Carte, November 27, 2007
- Chamber Music by Candlelight/Baltimore Sym. Orchestra musicians, 2nd Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, April 25, 2010
- Sunderman Woodwind Quintet, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA, October 18, 2013

## Choral Works

### Benefit of Going to Law (2004) 4:45 min.

This intimate song presents the wit and humor of Benjamin Franklin, received Encore Performance Incentive award with J. Andrew Dickenson from the American Composers Forum

**Guitar and Soprano**

- J. Andrew Dickenson and Yeonjune Suh on November 9, 2005 and July 11, 2005
- Harlie Sponaugle and Warren Zwicky Friday Morning Music Club Nov. 9, 2007 and Kennedy Center, Nov. 27, 2007

### My Letter from Carl (2007) 9:00 min.

Lyrics by Joseph Shapiro

Commissioned for the New Jersey Gay Men's Chorus and Director Steven A Russell, Carl writes his dear friend Joey to tell him how much he is missed.

**TTBB Chorus, Piano and Oboe**

- New Jersey Gay Men's Chorus, Unitarian Universalist Church, Titusville NJ, June 15, 2007)
- New Jersey Gay Men's Chorus, Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church, Plainfield NJ, June 16, 2007

### How I Found Sam (2006) 7:00 min.

Lyrics by Jim Skofield

Fun and upbeat, commissioned for San Francisco's Colla Voce.

**TTBB Chorus and Piano**

- Colla Voce, Steve Ng Director, Fairfield Center for Creative Arts, Fairfield CA June 11, 2006
- Colla Voce, Steve Ng Director, St John the Evangelist Church, San Francisco CA July 9, 2006
- Colla Voce, Steve Ng Director, Salle Pierre-Mercure, OutGames, Montreal, August 1, 2006, sold-out

### Tessitura Mission Statement Chorus (2005) 3:33 min.

Commissioned for the Tessitura Network annual conference in Boston, a thirty member volunteer chorus sang the network's mission statement set to music, under the direction of BWG. (Tessitura is a performing arts organization software.) BWG conducted annually from 2005 to 2020

**SATB and Piano**





## Simple Town (1997) 9:00 min.

The joys of growing up gay in rural America.

**TTBB Chorus and Piano**

## Music for Piano

### Music for Piano Solo I (1985) 6:30 min.

A short lyric atonal piece for piano solo

- Gettysburg College, Gettysburg PA 1985

### Music for Piano Solo II (1990) 16:00 min.

Using all 88 keys, this upbeat melodic journey explores different tonal centers and textures, including a “hoedown” performed by Guy Livingston in his “One Minute More”

### Music for Piano Solo III (1994) 12:00 min.

This tonal piece is defined by its melodic landscape. Pianist Craig Randal Johnson received a Performance Incentive Fund from the American Composers Forum to perform this work.

### Music III for Two Pianos (1995) 13:00 min.

Music for Piano Solo III is orchestrated with plenty of counterpoint to make a lively jubilant piano duo.

- Performed with Jay Egelberg, Steinway Hall, NYC 1996
- Shiphrah Meditz, Cameron Dennis, Kennedy Center, November 27, 2007

### Music for Piano Solo IV (Crystalline Textures) (1996) 12:30 min.

A response to minimalism, Crystalline Textures was written as an exercise in “transparent” or “crystalline” textures.

- Steinwall Hall 1997) (Ruth Rose, Kennedy Center, November 27, 2007



## Honors

**Gold Peer Award (2017) Children of Zeus**

(Music, Original Song) from Television, Internet & Video Association of DC (TIVA-DC)

**Bronze Peer Award (2017) Children of Zeus (Live Event) from Television, Internet & Video Association of DC (TIVA-DC)**

**Global Music Awards (Nov. 2017) Silver for Children of Zeus**

**Outstanding Emerging Artist, Annual Mayor’s Arts Awards, Washington DC (2013)**

Silver Peer Award (2012) for *Arc of Light: A Portrait of Anna Campbell Bliss* from Television, Internet & Video Association of DC (TIVA-DC)

Nomination, 2009 OUTmusic Awards, New York City

Bronze Peer Award (2008) for *Sadie's Waltz* from Television, Internet & Video Association of DC (TIVA-DC)

Artist Fellowship D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities (2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025)

ASCAP+ (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025)

Composers Assistance Program from American Music Center (2007, 2009)

Encore from American Composers Forum (2005)

ASCAP/NYU Buddy Baker Film Music Workshop (2005)

Rick Baitz Film Music Workshop (2011)



## Discography

*An Orchestral Journey*, Parma Recordings, Navona Label, released via Naxos August 12, 2016.  
Includes: Contentment, Jubilation, Suite for Chamber Orchestra, American Reflections and Chenonceau.

*Sparks Eye of London*, Parma Recordings, Navona Label, released October 28, 2022  
Includes Overture to For Whom the Bell Tolls Opera

