

UPDATED 7.31.2024

FULL BIO

David Biedenbender (b. 1984) is a composer, conductor, performer, educator, and interdisciplinary collaborator. His music "...seizes the ear through a blend of expressive beauty and formal prowess...at turns rapturous and intimate, menacing and exuberant...Biedenbender isn't afraid to wear heart on sleeve as he applies telling nuances to concise, exquisitely shaped sonic tales." (*Gramophone*) He has written music for the concert stage as well as for dance and multimedia collaborations, and his creative interests include working with classically trained musicians and improvisers, chamber and large ensembles, interactive electronic interfaces and live brain data. His music is influenced by experiences performing in rock and jazz groups, classical ensembles and concert bands, a New Orleans-style brass band, as well as Indian Carnatic Music. "...active, compelling...shot through with energy....wonderfully imagined...Clearly, this is a composer to watch out for." (*Fanfare Magazine*)

David is interested in the expressive power of combining strange and unusual elements—often timbres and textures—with things that are more familiar—like harmony and melody. He often embeds the resonance of imagined spaces into the music itself, using acoustic instruments to emulate electronic processes. He is also drawn to exploring the perception of time and memory in music through the relationships between various temporal layers, rhythm, and meter.

David has collaborated with many renowned performers and ensembles, including Alarm Will Sound, Albany (NY) Symphony Orchestra, PRISM Saxophone Quartet, Stenhammar String Quartet (Sweden), New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, VocalEssence, Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Music from Copland House, American Brass Quintet, and the New York Virtuoso Singers, among many others. His works for wind ensemble have been performed by distinguished ensembles around the world, including La garde Républicaine, the United States Navy Band, "President's Own" Marine Band, "Pershing's Own" Army Band, Army Field Band, Coast Guard Band, and Air Force Band," as well as many leading collegiate and conservatory wind ensembles. He was also the 2022 Guest Composer at Fermilab National Accelerator Laboratory, a Department of Energy national laboratory specializing in high-energy particle physics.

Recognition for David's work includes the Rudolf Nissim Prize, Sousa/Ostwald Award, two ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards, a Barlow Commission, and the Suzanne and Lee Ettelson Composers Award. His music has been heard in many diverse venues, including Carnegie Hall, Gaudeamus Muziekweek/TivoliVredenberg (Netherlands), Symphony Space (NYC), Smithsonian Museum, Antonín Dvořák Museum (Prague), Harris Hall (Aspen Music Festival), National Sawdust (NYC), the Interlochen Center for the Arts, as well as at numerous universities and conservatories, and it has been broadcast on NPR stations around the country. David's music can also be heard on many commercially available recordings, including on Blue Griffin, Naxos, XAS, Summit, Cobra, GIA, Centaur, Bright Shiny Things, and Innova record labels, among others.

In addition to composing, David is a dedicated teacher. He is Associate Professor and Chair of Composition in the College of Music at Michigan State University, and he has served previously on the composition and theory faculty at Boise State University, Eastern Michigan University, Oakland University, Madonna University, Music in the Mountains Summer Conservatory in Durango, CO, and the Interlochen Arts Camp. His composition students have achieved regional and national recognition for their creative work, including numerous awards and acceptance into renowned summer music festivals and undergraduate and graduate composition programs.

He holds degrees from the University of Michigan (DMA, MM) and Central Michigan University (BM). His musical mentors include Evan Chambers, Kristin Kuster, Stephen Rush, Michael Daugherty, Bright Sheng, Christopher Lees, David R. Gillingham, José Luis-Maurtua, John Williamson, and Mark Cox. He also studied at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study with Anders Hillborg and Steven Stucky, the Aspen Music Festival and School, and in Mysore, India where he studied South Indian Carnatic music, focusing on the mridangam with Vidwan G.S. Ramanujan. For more information, visit www.davidbiedenbender.com.

250 Word Bio

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David has collaborated with many renowned performers and ensembles, and his works have been performed, recorded, and broadcast around the world. His works for wind ensemble in particular are performed widely, including by many distinguished ensembles such as La garde Républicaine, the premier U.S. military bands, and many leading collegiate and conservatory wind ensembles.

A dedicated teacher, he is currently Associate Professor and Chair of Composition in the College of Music at Michigan State University. He holds degrees in composition from the University of Michigan and Central Michigan University, and has also studied at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study, the Aspen Music Festival, and in Mysore, India where he studied Carnatic music. For more information, visit: www.davidbiedenbender.com.

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150 Word Bio

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100 Word Bio

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Media/Press

"...an indeed poetic body of work that's gripping, sometimes bare and other times textured with more intensity, Biedenbender's vision is fleshed out with much care here."

3.9.2024 | **Take Effect Reviews** review of *all we are given we cannot hold* (album).

"...Biedenbender's new trumpet concerto...more than fulfilled its stated goal of probing the essence of time. To begin with, it made 20 minutes go by in an eye blink... it raised gooseflesh with its urgent clarion calls to seize every precious moment of life...To take the soloist on this cosmic journey, the orchestra morphed through numberless shifts in color, tempo and volume with amazing rapidity and logic. This part must have been a real bear to master, but the music's unity of vision and exhilarating freshness made it worth the effort."

1.18.2024 | **Lansing City Pulse** (MI), "LSO folds time with world-premiere trumpet concerto." Review of *River of Time* by Lawrence Cosentino.

"...magnificent material...Biedenbender's poignant music—frenetic at one moment and tender the next—parallels the emotional trajectory of Fanning's words...Again the composer fashions music to amplify the emotional character of the poet's texts, the combination potent whether the music's a whisper or a scream."

Oct. 2023 | **textura.org** review of *all we are given we cannot hold* (album).

"Each of the works on this recording of music by David Biedenbender seizes the ear through a blend of expressive beauty and formal prowess. In two song-cycles and two instrumental pieces written within the past decade, the American composer explores a range of feelings about love, family and nature. The narratives are at turns rapturous and intimate, menacing and exuberant. Biedenbender isn't afraid to wear heart on sleeve as he applies telling nuances to concise, exquisitely shaped sonic tales."

"Sustained vocal lines and glistening instrumental sonorities fill the urgent spaces in the two movements of *Shell and Wing* and the disc's titular *all we are given we cannot hold*."

"...Biedenbender's lyrical writing gives distinctive modern urgency to musings on parents and children."

"In *all we are given we cannot hold*, the themes of holding on and letting go receive nostalgic and wrenching treatment. The seven songs reveal the mutability of Biedenbender's art, which responds to Fanning's verses with comforting and playful enchantment or turns ominous as a family is about to be wiped out in a car crash."

"The two instrumental works confirm that Biedenbender doesn't need words to achieve compelling musical results"

AW23 | **Gramophone Magazine**, "BIEDENBENDER *all we are given we cannot hold* (Review)" by Donald Rosenberg. Review of *all we are given we cannot hold* album.

"...*all we are given we cannot hold* is one of the finest song cycles I have heard this year...Biedenbender's music should gain wider currency...Biedenbender's love affair with voice notwithstanding, his instrumental music is equally compelling."

9.24.2023 | **Sequenza 21**, "David Biedenbender Portrait CD on Blue Griffin (Review)" by Christian Carey. Review of *all we are given we cannot hold* album.

"...exquisite text setting...This is an album you will love as you listen again and again."

8.15.2023 | **Classical Voice North Carolina**, "David Biedenbender's *all we are given we cannot hold* is an Intimate Portrait and Masterful Collaboration, CD Review" by Karen E. Moorman. Review of *all we are given we cannot hold* album.

"This is an active, compelling piece, shot through with energy that is conveyed in no unsure terms by Lulloff. The close is witty; the piece is wonderfully imagined throughout...Clearly this is a composer to watch out for."

July/Aug 2023 | **Fanfare Magazine**, "*New Stories* by Joseph Lulloff & Yu-Lien The, CD Review" by Colin Clarke. Review of *Detroit Steel Us* performed by Joseph Lulloff & Yu-Lien The.

"No stranger to saxophone chamber music David Biedenbender has once again written a masterpiece. *Between Us* is another one of Biedenbender's outpourings of intellectualism within basic human emotions. Faced with the pandemic, Biedenbender explores many of the same issues we all experienced while living through a pandemic...It is a wonderful composition that capstones the recording with the reminder that we do this together."

Jan/Feb 2022 | **TheSaxophonist.org**, "Duo Entre-Nous, Fresh Ink, CD Review" by Steve Carmichael. Review of *Between Us* performed by Duo Entre-Nous.

"This is a powerful piece...Biedenbender's music was touching and soaring..."

7.15.2022 | **EarRelevant.com**, "A Pittsburgh Music Diary: July 3–10, 2022" by William Ford. Review of *Shell and Wing* performed by the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble.

"...conjure[s] up the wide expanses of land in the American West, with gentle, shimmering reveries like a 21st century version of Aaron Copland"

5.27.2020 | **San Francisco Chronicle Datebook**, "Music inspired by America's national parks, and other new recordings" by Joshua Kosman. Review of *Red Vesper* on Dawn Chorus (album) by the Grand Valley State New Music Ensemble.

"...There's a hush to the piece that's wholly in keeping with the title, vesper being an evening prayer and the colour choice a reference to both the glow of the evening sun and the red of the rock formations in the Capitol Reef National Park, though the music eventually builds to a radiant climax suggestive of rapturous experience."

April 2020 | **Textura.org** review of *Red Vesper* on Dawn Chorus by Grand Valley State New Music Ensemble.

"The highlight of the program was...*Refraction*...Biedenbender impressed thanks to his mastery of the compositional art in many levels. In the short, three-movement work, he was able to combine ancient chant and counterpoint procedures with heavy metal rhythms and gestures, while maintaining a sense of cohesiveness and stylistic unity."

2.20.2019 | **Palm Beach Daily News** (Palm Beach, FL) "Reed quintet delights in concert Palm Beach Museum" by Márcio Bezerra. Review of *Refraction* (reed quintet).

"...It is a remarkable work."

Jan. 2019 | **Journal of Singing** (January 2019, volume 5 issue: 3 start page: 379). Review of *Staying the Night* (on *Poet as Muse* album).

“...profound and gripping...”

12.27.2018 | **Lansing City Pulse** (MI), “Jazz and Classical Highlights of 2018” by Lawrence Cosentino.

“The words ‘introspection’ and ‘trombone concerto’ are seldom heard together. Let’s work on that. Symphonic fireworks and cataclysms are great, but Thursday’s Lansing Symphony concert featured something very different — a profound meditation on life’s mysteries, issuing in low tones from a long metal tube...This was deeply personal music, very different from the flashy back-and-forth volleys that fill most violin or piano concertos. The pure, coppery tones curling out of [Ava] Ordman’s instrument went up your back, into your neck and straight up the base of your brain. The music was constantly on the verge of resolving into a juicy melody or sweet series of chords — i.e., an easy answer — but it never did...It’s no wonder the seemingly archaic concerto form has lasted so long. It has evolved from a way to show off one musician’s virtuosity against a fancy backdrop to something much deeper — a perfect platform for playing out the relationship between a soul and the universe around it...[This] concerto itself is a fabulous mystery that deserves to be heard again.”

11.22.2018 | **Lansing City Pulse** (MI), “Overheard undertones” By Lawrence Cosentino.

“The first piece, Mr. Biedenbender’s ‘Red Vesper,’ stole the show. Spacious and ceremonious, the work is inspired by national parks in the American West, where the Wisconsin-born composer would often go for reflection and meditation. His experimentation with sound was like a true nocturnal Western adventure. The piece started with flute mimicking the whistle of the wind or an animal, accompanied by electronic nature sounds, violin, cello, clarinet and piano. The work’s polyphonic writing brought out the timbre and melody of each instrument. Slow but methodical at first, it crescendoed into a vespereal epiphany and steadily drew to a close as the creatures and instruments each fell asleep. The end result was a nature’s hymn to the wild.”

7.25.2017 | **Pittsburgh Post-Gazette** (Pittsburgh, PA), “Review: Catharsis, confusion part of Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble performance” by Adalberto Toledo.

“...David Biedenbender’s textless *Flux*, an examination of musical sounds. This exceptionally rhythmically demanding work explored surges, shifts, replications and regressions in various syllables; vowel and consonant emphases alternated. The dramatic fortissimo almost-conclusion followed by a dissolution into infinitely delicate soundlessness was lovely.”

5.28.2017 | **TheatreScene.net** (New York, NY), “The New York Virtuoso Singers: Morton Gould/ASCAP Composer Award Recipients” by Jean Ballard Terepka.

“...the contemporary pieces that came later proved to be both explosively dramatic and intriguingly experimental. *Radiant Spheres* (2014) by David Biedenbender, which Higgins commissioned, managed to say an awful lot in just six minutes. From bluesy and introspective to anguished and finally pacified, the beautiful work for trombone and piano alerted us to a real emerging talent.”

4.20.2017 | **Bay Area Reporter** (San Francisco, CA), “The Brass Age,” by Philip Campbell.

“David Biedenbender’s...*Refraction* fully explores the sonic possibilities of the wind instruments. The oboe squeaks, the sax squeals, the bassoon squonks; the clarinetists walk offstage to produce monasterial echo effects...nasty power chords...that would make *Morbid Angel* jealous. The group’s powerful intimacy came to the front in the *Kyrie*’s imitative counterpoint, brief melodic figures and quick little mordents ricocheting around the ensemble like antiphonal motets in a medieval cathedral.”

10.21.2016 | **Oregon ArtsWatch** (Portland, OR), “Akropolis Reed Quintet: Strutting and strolling” by Matthew Neil Andrews.

“David Biedenbender’s *Surface Tension*...roared forward with the urgency of a freight train (somehow, I kept thinking of ‘Orange Blossom Special’).”

5.4.2015 | **The Morning Call** (Allentown, PA) “Review: PUBLIQuartet takes chamber music daring new places at Raritan River Festival” by Steve Siegel.

“Another success was ‘Stomp,’ a highly rhythmic and tonally striking work by David Biedenbender. The jazz-infused work seemed to imagine a barn dance gone awry and, though employing complex musical language, proved brilliantly crafted and most entertaining.”

7.11.2014 | **The Barre-Montpelier Times Argus** (VT), “TURNmusic truly something new,” by Jim Lowe.

“...modern, venturesome, and inexorable...The excitement, intensity, and freshness that characterizes Biedenbender’s music hung in the Timucua house long after the last note was played.”

5.6.2013 | **Examiner.com** (Orlando, FL), “H2 Quartet plays at Timucua in downtown Orlando.” Review of *you’ve been talking in your sleep*.

“...the loveliest piece of the evening...the music also has a warming effect...stirring harmonies...”

4.29.2013 | **Boston Classical Review**, “Boston New Music Initiative serves up a bracing array of works,” by Aaron Keebaugh. Review of *Winter Sunset*.

“...simply beautiful...”

12.1.2012 | **Pioneer Press** (St. Paul, MN) and TwinCities.com, Review: “With carols old and new, VocalEssence welcomes Christmas,” by Rob Hubbard. Review of *This Night*.

“The one piece from this program that I’ve since revisited simply for pleasure’s sake is David Biedenbender’s saxophone quartet *you’ve been talking in your sleep*...”

11.28.2012 | **NewMusicBox**, “Composers, Inc. Introduces San Francisco Opera Brass,” by Sidney Chen. Review of *you’ve been talking in your sleep*.