

Wooden Cities *A More-er Very-er Wooden Christmas*



[Wooden Cities](#) is at it again for a fourth time with its silent Christmas film live-scoring extravaganza! Travel to the North Pole, meet the many forms of the big jolly guy, and see how christmas crackers are made. It's "The More-er Very-est Wooden Christmas" Ever!

The eight shorts, all filmed between 1898 and 1925, map the full range of the silent film era, and include works by acclaimed directors Edwin S. Porter and D.W. Griffith, as well as lesser known artists like Frank Kleinschmidt. The films themselves range from simple, non-narrative moving portraits to works with complex plots and elaborate imagery, and feature many of the most endearing aspects of silent film: the transparent special effects, melodramatic gestural acting, comically inexplicable edits, and, underneath it all, a warm, nostalgic poignancy. This year's program also features George Albert Smith's 1898 short, *Santa Claus*, the first Christmas film ever made.

Wooden Cities will perform live music to accompany these films, providing soundtracks that by turns augment, mimic, comment on, or undercut the action onscreen. The scores—each written by past or current members of the ensemble—range from explicitly notated, leitmotif-dense compositions, to quasi-improvisatory free jazz outbursts. At times, the music directly mirrors the action on the screen, providing Carl Stalling-esque sonic narrations; other times, the music subversively undermines the film, revealing darker, more uncanny aspects only hinted at onscreen. In every case, the ensemble provides a dynamic energy, adding new dimensions and contemporary perspectives to these century-old films.

In addition, poet/visual artist Robin Lee Jordan will present *Santa ClaWs*, a holiday-themed horror/comedy visual found-poem presented as a series of satirical vignettes remixing the kitten-filled, family friendly 2014 holiday film, *Santa Claws*. Jordan will then team up with sonic artist Adam Drury to present a bleak re-telling of Dr. Seuss' optimistic holiday classic, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*

Program to feature:

The Night Before Christmas (1905), dir. Edwin S. Porter

A Winter Straw Ride (1906), dir. Wallace McCutcheon & E.S. Porter

Santa Claus (1925), dir. Frank Kleinschmidt

A Christmas Carol (1910), dir. J. Searle Dawley

A Holiday Pageant at Home (1901)

A Trap for Santa (1909), dir. D.W. Griffith

Making Christmas Crackers (1910), dir. Cricks & Martin

Santa Claus (1898), dir. George Albert Smith

...and other holiday surprises!

Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center

December 14, 2018

8:00pm

\$10 students / seniors / vets

\$8 Hallwalls members

\$12 general



Wooden Cities is both an ensemble and a collective of performers and composers seeking to help increase the performance and awareness of contemporary music in the Western New York area through unique, educational presentations. Formed in July 2011, the group served as a vehicle for director Brendan Fitzgerald to present John Zorn's game piece *Cobra*. Since that time, the group has grown to include nearly a dozen performers and is constantly seeking new works by new composers while continuing to present works by some of the essential, yet underrepresented composers of the 20th and 21st centuries. The ensemble recently recorded their first album, which will be released in 2019.