LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY
CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

Guest Recital

Wooden Cathedral

Emmett Jackson, double bass
Matt Sargent, composer and electronics

Wednesday, October 14, 2026
8:00 p.m.
Harper Hall

Matt Sargent
(b. 1984)

Wooden Cathedral 56'
I.
II. Wooden Bells
III.

Emmett Jackson, double bass and electronics

Program Note

Wooden Cathedral is a concert-length work for bass, commissioned by Emmett Jackson. I met Emmett when he presented my piece for ten basses, *Tide*, in a cathedral in Frankfurt, Germany. When we discussed a new piece, I started to conceive of the double bass itself as a cathedral and started thinking about music that would respond to its architecture.

In December 2025, I was on an international flight back to New York from France. I spent most of my time in France dwelling on the music of Guillaume de Machaut. My music often engages with contrapuntal and canonic techniques first developed in medieval Europe. I was filled with new ideas on the trip after sketching around the same cathedrals and cities as Machaut and his peers. While on the flight, I hit upon a method of reordering the notes of the opening phrase of Machaut's *Messe de Nostre Dame*. I wrote some code to hear out the new idea: the resulting sound moved very slowly from an ecstatic kind of consonance to sublime dissonance. I tried the same technique on the next two phrases and the shape for *Wooden Cathedral* emerged.

Wooden Cathedral is an immersion into the sound of the bass, using its full range over three movements to build a sonic cathedral.

—Matt Sargent

We collectively acknowledge that Lawrence University is situated on the ancestral homelands of the Menominee and Ho-Chunk people.

GUEST BIOS

Matt Sargent (b. 1984) is a composer, guitarist, and recording engineer based in New York, where he is an assistant professor of music at Bard College. A versatile artist with an international reputation for his prolific musical life on the concert stage and in the recording studio, Sargent's music has been described as "remarkable from all angles." (Colin Clarke, *Fanfare Magazine*)

His compositions have been described as "bringing a sharpened sense of the transcendental into the 21st century" (Paul Muller, Sequenza21) and "a veritable fountain of intensifying, kaleidoscopic spumes." (Peter Margasak, Bandcamp) On *Ghost Music*, Bill Meyer writes, "this music isn't about following in anyone's footsteps, it uses bare resources to establish a bounded and essential place." (*The Wire Magazine*)

As a performer, Matt is engaged with a wide vocabulary of music for the electric guitar and pedal steel. He recently released *Walk In Praise of All Metals*, a co-composed album for electric guitar and custom electroacoustic instruments, with composer/luthier Ben Luca Robertson. He co-composed a new work for just intonation electric guitar with Robert Carl, *Splectar*, which can be heard on Carl's *Infinity Avenue* (Neuma Records, 2024). His recording of James Romig's hour-length solo piece for electric guitar, *The Fragility of Time* was released on *A Wave Press* in 2024. His long-standing duo with Dani Dobkin has been described as "the spiritually grounded sound of Sargent's electric guitar and the extraterrestrial signal of Dobkin's systems" (Ted Gordon) and "a guitar record retrieved from far in the future." (Antonio Poscic, Research Music)

As a researcher, Matt builds custom music software for other musicians and artists. His work has a special focus on musical algorithms, generative music environments, and real-time notation systems. He is on the scientific program committee for the 2026 Mathematics and Computation in Music International Conference. He developed a networked music notation program for the Swiss-based Ever Present Orchestra, which facilitated performance of numerous large ensemble works composed by Alvin Lucier. Praising his technical work on Robert Carl's album, *Splectra* (Cold Blue Music), *Fanfare Magazine* writes, "he could find no better collaborator than composer and sound designer Matt Sargent."

Emmett Jackson is a Chicago-based double bassist specializing in contemporary music. He has performed with renowned ensembles such as Ensemble Modern, the Grossman Ensemble, Ensemble dal Niente, and the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra. Over the course of his career, Emmett has had the honor of premiering over 50 new works ranging from solo bass to orchestral works by composers including Rebecca Saunders, and Thomas Adès. A veteran performer abroad, Emmett has appeared at numerous European festivals including Time of Music (Finland), Into the Open (Berlin/Vilnius), Lucerne Festival (Switzerland), and Gaudeamus Muziekweek (Netherlands). He spent his summers as a student absorbing knowledge from a multitude of teachers at the Lucerne Festival Academy, Domaine Forget, Orford Musique, and the Marrowstone Music Festival.

In 2023, Emmett co-founded Trio Anbau, alongside two members of the Ensemble Modern Academy, a trio dedicated to commissioning and performing new works for viola, cello, and double bass. In their debut season, Trio Anbau enjoyed performances at multiple venues in Germany, along with performances abroad in both Switzerland and Lithuania.

Closer to home, Emmett is the assistant principal bass of the Fox Valley Symphony and has also substituted with orchestras throughout the Midwest, including the Madison, Quad Cities, Illinois, and Grant Park Symphony Orchestras. From 2019 to 2021, he was a member of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, a training program affiliated with the Chicago Symphony.

Emmett holds a Bachelor's from Lawrence University, a Master's from Northwestern University, and a Master's in Contemporary Music from the International Ensemble Modern Academy in Frankfurt. His teachers include Mark Urness, Andrew Raciti, and Paul Cannon.