

Based in southern Chester County, composer-guitarist Van Stiefel has collaborated with many leading guitarists including Benjamin Verdery, Eliot Fisk, Daniel Lippel, and the Minneapolis Guitar Quartet. Featured recently by the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) of New York on its 2018 OpenICE Festival, his music was also programmed during XXX Festival de Musica Contemporanea de La Habana (Cuba) in November 2017. An all-Stiefel concert will be presented during the Lagonegra International Guitar Festival in Italy in August 2018. He has performed and lectured at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and an all-Stiefel concert was presented by the Yale Guitar Extravaganza in 2014. In May 2015, Stiefel conducted the Orchestra Sinfonica Carlo Coccia in the premiere of his blues-inspired concerto Bound for electric guitar and chamber orchestra, with Sergio Sorrentino as soloist, presented by the Società del Quartetto di Vercelli.

Stiefel began musical studies at age six on the classical guitar and was awarded the Andres Segovia Fellowship to attend the Banff Centre's Winter Cycle. At Banff, he became drawn to more experimental approaches to music and performance, studying with composers Robert Aitken and Vinko Globokar. He eventually evolved an approach to guitar that synthesized classical technique and forms with electric guitar and interactive technologies. In the late 90's, with Bryce Dessner, he formed with Sap Dream Electric Guitar Quartet presenting new works by Stiefel, Dessner, Paul Lansky, Marc Mellits, and Steve Mackey. At the 2000 New York Guitar Festival, the quartet performed with Bang On A Can all-star, Mark Stewart.

A featured speaker at TEDx Phoenixville concerning his work with laptop ensembles, Stiefel has been a visiting artist with PLOrk (the Princeton Laptop Orchestra) and participated at the first Symposium for Laptop Orchestras and Ensembles at LSU. The Filament Festival at EMPAC (Rensselaer Polytechnic) and the Philadelphia Museum of Art presented 'already seen,' an interactive music and dance collaboration with the Miller-Rothlein Company (MIRO) of Philadelphia. An earlier Neil-Young-inspired collaboration with Miller-Rothlein and the folk-rock band The Toy Soldiers (Ron Gallo) culminated in a performance at the Kimmel Center.

For his piece, Wyeth Songs, Stiefel set poems by poet David Livewell about the life and work of artist Andrew Wyeth creating a piece for the Kennett Symphony Children's Chorus with baritone soloist Randy Scarlata, electric guitar and sound projection. Bob Dugan of BigThink wrote that the collaboration with composer and community "redefined the idea of multimedia" and "created a magical space like that of Wyeth's art itself--beyond space and time, deceiving in its simplicity."

Stiefel's music has been supported by the Augustine Foundation, the Georgia Council for the Arts, Mid-Atlantic Arts Council, Met-Life Composer Connections, Art in Odd Places (Atlanta Olympic Festival), Arts Festival of Atlanta, and the American Composers' Forum. Recordings of his music are available on the Mode Records, Innova, and New Focus Recording labels. He holds a BA/MM in guitar performance from Yale University and a PhD in music composition from Princeton University. He is Professor of music at West Chester University of Pennsylvania and has served on the faculty of

Princeton, McGill, and the Norfolk New Music Workshop.