

BROOKLYN ABRIDGED

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## MIT's Glass Band Might Just Blow Your Mind

by Sam Blum  No Comments



Mark Stewart (center) and some Glass Band companions. Photo: urban glass.org

Musical instruments aren't typically made of glass. Glass is the stuff of impending mishaps, of dropped objects that explode and splatter into jagged little shards when someone isn't careful. But when used in a homespun and improvisational way, glass can lend itself to music—think of the empty jug you blew into as a kid, or the way your Mom's fine crystal used to ping when you tapped it with chopsticks.

For years now, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Glass Lab has been constructing weird, polymorphous glass objects to bridge the divide between science and art. It wasn't until 2013 that MIT's Glass Lab realized that all their creations had distinct tonal qualities, though, and right around that time the group decided to start a band, creating a glass orchestra of sorts (which isn't the only one around, as it happens).

But MIT's is the only stemware band to have the leadership of composer Mark Stewart, a guitarist who's worked with the likes of Paul McCartney, Paul Simon and Philip Glass (go figure). Under a teaching residency Mr. Stewart recently served at MIT, the Glass Band has composed a show worthy of your attention, and they will perform at the Agnes Varis Art Center tonight at 6:00 pm.

You've probably never been surrounded by as much crystalline material as you will be upon entering the Agnes Varis Art Center, which is alternatively known as Urban Glass, a self-described "community built around artists who use glass as a creative material." It's also likely you've never seen glass bowls strummed with violin bows or heard the timbre of an oblong glass flute. So if you have time to spare this evening, try something different, like watching MIT students play weird instruments made entirely of glass. After all, the show is free.

Varis Art Center, 647 Fulton St., Brooklyn, 11217

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