



University of North Texas
College of Music

Ensemble Concert | Monday, September 23, 2024 | 8:00 p.m.
Merrill Ellis Intermedia Theater

Spectrum

- Mind Mirrors: Reflections on Being Benjamin Shirey
(b. 1985)
fixed media
- an infinite diversity of tortures* Benjamin Damann
(b. 1994)
Benjamin Damann, percussion
fixed media
- Coconut* Colin Stokes
(b. 1987)
fixed media
- Forecasting Emptiness* David Stout
Lyricist, Producer, Co-composer
(b. 1955)
in collaboration with generative AI system
fixed media - generative AI
- Fading Embers*..... Noah Salem
(b. 2002)
fixed media
- La Solitudine delle Moltitudini* Marco Buongiorno Nardelli
(b. 1964)
fixed media (audio+video)

Program twenty-nine of the 2024–2025 season
Photography and videography are prohibited

Snow Dust II (Windjammer)JD Fuller
(b. 2004)

DW Hopeton, (fixed) granular drums
SD Hopeton, (fixed) electronics

The Cached Pre-Posthuman Love Dairies..... Music by Pak Hei (Alvin) Leung
VI. If Udio
VII. True Lyrics by Pak Hei (Alvin) Leung
(b. 1997)

stereo fixed media

Program Notes

Mind Mirrors: Reflections on Being

Mind Mirrors: Reflections on Being began as an exploration of meditation, ontology, and time. Initially rooted in contemplations of existence, the piece later evolved into my first collaboration with artificial intelligence, where the interplay between human intuition and AI logic shaped its progression. This collaboration led to a unique dialogue, blurring the lines between the organic and synthetic. Ultimately, the work came full circle, revisiting ontological questions through AI's perspective, offering a fresh contemplation on the nature of being in an era where human and machine perspectives increasingly converge.

Forecasting Emptiness

This work is one in a growing body of cinematic songs exploring the potential of the written word (lyrics) to bring forth a sound world and guide musical content and structure utilizing generative AI music systems. Questions abound re: the role of artist / composer in the use of AI based composition. Wearing the hat of DJ/curator, record producer, sound editor, re-mix artist, and lyricist, *Forecasting Emptiness* demonstrates the emotional power latent within large music models. The lyrics are not written first but are developed dynamically in response to the musical utterances of the system to build out a song over many dozens of successive 30 second iterations.

Fading Embers

Fading Embers is inspired by the imagery of an experience I had this summer, sitting in silence in a spacious New England backyard, near 10pm after a fire we had at a family gathering. Watching the way the embers grew in light and then faded was almost musical, though lost in rhythm. This piece evokes this by having reversed textures come out from the cluster, arrhythmically and from improvisation.

La Solitudine delle Moltitudini

La Solitudine delle Moltitudini (video installation and electroacoustic cantata for 16 female voices on fixed media (2023-24) - soprano and lyrics: Júlia Coelho) is an audio-visual installation that creates an immersive and emotional space for the audience. *La Solitudine delle Moltitudini* is a metaphor of our increasingly interconnected world, where data and information shape our perception of self. This ecosystem is represented both graphically and musically, by graphs and networks, that provide the main visual material and are at the foundation of the generative musical score. The score incorporates elements of AI generated sounds through a synthesis method mediated by a proprietary recurrent neural network (RNN) model based on the SampleRNN architecture of Mehri et al. (2017). The model was

trained on the same samples recorded by the soprano Júlia Coelho for the installation, and thus does not use any data from third parties. The AI generated samples are incorporated in the fabric of the composition exploiting the same geometrical structure of its pitch and rhythmic spaces to create a subliminal trace in the imaginary of the listeners.

Snow Dust II (Windjammer)

Thank you for tuning in to SD's Saturn Station... on the planet of Titan, the water is mostly methane, and so the snow is very different from that of Earth. This piece was recorded with my sister DW in some snowy areas of a few craters. Meditate on change, snow dripping, & don't worry.

The Cached Pre-Posthuman Love Dairies

The Cached Pre-Posthuman Love Dairies (2024) is a cycle of seven songs, in which I experimented with generating audio using Udio based on lyrics I wrote, further edited and mixed with the assistance from Logic Pro's newest stem splitting and mastering function. The idea of the work is triggered by conversations I had with friends on how digital culture has influenced human interaction and connection. I thus imagine a fiction situation in which love dairy pages (which, in some ways, contains my own reflections on various forms of love, put into lyrics) of a "pre-posthuman" are archeologically discovered as cache in the sea of data in the highly digitalized future.

For the two songs that will be presented tonight, If serves as a more melancholic and emotional track in the song cycle, reflecting the way people interact on social media and what impact it brings to human connection. True is inspired by a personal experience, in which a friend of mine and I managed to "meet" briefly on two different floors in an airport during layover.

Lyrics:

If

If you leave me
I'll let it be
Just because
There's no other choice
If you loved me
I'll remember
Just because
There's no way
To forget

If you liked my post

I'll like yours back
That's how
We're meant to interact
If I DM you
I'll got no reply
Just because
That's too much for us

Every talk
Will be an easy talk
Since the hard ones are blocked
Every face
Will not be remembered
The A.I. 'll help me out
The A.I. 'll help me out

Kids playing joyfully
As if in a playground
On their tablets
Look at their bright eyes
Reflecting the screen lights
As if sunshine
Lie so much,
Lie so much
hypothetical and hypnotic hope

As if everything will be better
As if everything will be better
If they're easier

If this is the future
If, if this is the future
I'd better memorize
I'd better memorize
What it feels like
To be hugged...

True

Is it true
That love
Is an H-T-T-P 404
At the start
Or the end

Well, it is true

That there's
No true love
At the origin
Or the destination

There's an end
Since the beginning
In the end
There is no beginning

So let's try to meet
At the intersection
At the connection
At which we get to talk
And learn to love
Ever so briefly
Before we depart

There's an end
To each conversation
But also beginnings
If you want to

So let's try to seize
All our interaction
All our connection
At which we learn to talk
And get to love
Ever so slightly
Before we depart