

Chirp:
NEC's Music Technology
Showcase

*Music beyond the threshold:
a concert of computer-assisted music*

Stratis Minakakis, curator

Friday, May 10, 2024
7:00 p.m., Pre-concert Lecture – 8:00 p.m., Concert
Plimpton Shattuck Black Box Theatre

If there is one attribute that permeates the evolution of music in the past century, it is the radical expansion of its means of expression. As the frontiers of the medium expanded, older compositional practices were abandoned or repurposed, and new ones were invented. The electronic music revolution and the adoption, since the 1960s, of computers as compositional tools transformed the field to the extent that several compositional practices of the last 50 years are not truly accessible without the aid of technology. The efficiency of computers as interpreters of symbols, automators of tasks, and problem solvers make them ideal companions in exploring music that pushes the frontiers of sonic imagination and creates new modalities of experiencing music and music-making.

This concert features acoustic, electronic and multimedia works in which the computer has been an integral collaborator in the compositional process. Through reimagining older music, mapping new paths in instrumental possibilities, prototyping interactive scores, navigating liminal auditory spaces, and creating new musical grammars in notated and improvised compositional practices, tonight's program offers a fascinating survey of original computer-assisted music composed by NEC faculty, alumni, and current students.

– Stratis Minakakis

PROGRAM

Johannes Ockeghem

Quant de vous seul je pers la veue

For 3 singers

Chihiro Asano, mezzo-soprano
Nathan Halbur, Johan Hartman,
bass-baritone

Kyle Quarles

Fragments 15.0-15.6 (Ockeghem Anamorph)

for 6 amplified singers and video

Agne Giedraityte, soprano
Chihiro Asano, Yifei Zhou, mezzo-soprano
Tianyi Wang, tenor
Kyle Quarles, Johan Hartman, bass-baritone

This piece is based on the chanson *Quant de vous* by Johannes Ockeghem. It uses temporal dynamic networks in Max MSP to create a guided improvisation environment for the singers. The melodic, structural, and phenomic syntax of the Ockeghem is encoded as a series of directed graphs for each voice. The singers then make choices within these graphs, using touchscreens. – Kyle Quarles

Stratis Minakakis

Ben Eidson, video design and programming

For Felipe M.

for solo amplified saxophone and video

Don-Paul Kahl, baritone saxophone
Ben Eidson, video

For Felipe M. is a love song to ephemeral things. It is composed of material that engages the margins of auditory perception: islands of fragile sound between pockets of silence, quasi-subliminal signals that disappear in the distance, streams of seemingly interminable melodies, and static sounds of delicate polarities. These four sound types are arranged in an idiomatic “Lieder Ohne Worte” form composed of seven epigrammatic Verses and two extended Stanzas. If there is one common thread that permeates the nature of this material, it is the predilection for minuscule gradations, particularly evident in the nano-microtonal melodies and delicate nuances of breath tones, both of which the result of painstaking collaboration with

saxophonist Don-Paul Kahl. By drawing attention to such esoteric nuances, the work aims to create an intimate space between performer and listener, inviting the latter to an inward journey of what the poet C.P. Cavafy calls “indistinct sensations.”

Felipe M. was a rescue cat that left too soon due to congenital heart disease. He was one of the most empathic, kind, and generous beings who, in the four short months of his life with us, blessed Dolores, Catalina, and Stratis with unconditional love and happiness.
– *Stratis Minakakis*

Grant Beale

Autóphagos I

for solo electric guitar and fixed media

Grant Beale, electric guitar

Autóphagos I is the first piece in a series of compositions in which pitch domains, and kinesthetic environments navigated on an instrument are transformed by a self-consumptive process. Once change is initiated, the available material is permanently altered into a new syntax. Due to the pluralistic nature of pitches available on guitar, illusory fragments of original gestures still remain, gaining new timbral properties from the interaction with alternate physical realms of the instrument. In tandem with live guitar, the fixed media explores branching gestural paths, which traverse sets, and subsets of spatial boundaries.
– *Grant Beale*

Intermission

Xiaofeng Jiang

notes, echoes, too, from that veiled realm

for large ensemble and electronics

woodwinds

Honor Hickman, alto flute

Corinne Foley, oboe

Evan Chu, bass clarinet

Dillon Acey, baritone saxophone

Evan Judson, bassoon

brass

Isaac Dubow, French horn

Mark Tipton, trumpet

Quinn S. McGillis, trombone

percussion and electronics

Noah Mark, percussion

Yali Levy Schwartz, piano

Tianyi Wang, electronics

strings

Yirou Ronnie Zhang, violin 1

Tara Hagle, violin 2

Philip Rawlinson, viola

Lily Stern, cello

Mark Abramovski, double bass

conductor

Stratis Minakakis

I delve into the realm of subconscious and forgotten memories, hidden within the enigmatic spaces of my mind, to reveal the unknown spaces and the dormant sounds they hold.

The ensemble is depicted as vessels harboring reservoirs of layered memories, each one housing intricate layers of nebulous and distant echoes. These elusive sounds are referred to as the 'echoes of the external world,' capable of lying dormant within the unconscious or the subconscious. Some of these auditory cues have the power to evoke memories, triggering a resonant response within one's body and inner world. This intriguing phenomenon gradually draws individuals out of their present reality, guiding them into those shrouded corners of their psyche.

– Xiaofeng Jiang

Ben Eidson

VISS O

for solo amplified saxophone and video

Don-Paul Kahl, alto saxophone

Ben Eidson, video

In *VISS O*, three improvisational frameworks merge, each linked to a distinct video effect and offering different levels of responsiveness to the performer. Each system introduces a varying degree of interpretational ambiguity. At times, the screen may display either vague or overwhelming amounts of information, forcing the performer to make assumptions or concessions in interpreting the material. Additionally, the score includes notations for saxophone techniques that are physically impossible to execute.

Collectively, these frameworks create a highly dense space that challenges the performer to constantly adjust and find their footing, either within or against the complex environment.

– Ben Eidson

Katarina Miljkovic

Crescent

for solo amplified saxophone and live
electronics

Don-Paul Kahl, alto saxophone

Katarina Miljkovic, electronics

Crescent is a piece of slow motion, an introspective elaboration on a spectrum of saxophone multiphonics. The underlying time-grid, based on a breathing pattern intrinsic to the performer, unfolds through six distinct movements. In each movement, the sound bends through a gradient of intensity levels, recalling the fluctuation of light. The overarching process leads a listener from the fragility of breathing and barely perceptible sounds to the full strength of saxophone multiphonics. The piece embodies the metamorphosis from the fragile to the vivid, rooted in the fundamental act of breathing.

– Katarina Miljkovic

Upcoming Concerts at NEC

Visit necmusic.edu for complete and updated concert and ticketing information

NEC CMA HONORS ENSEMBLE: RED BIRD

Karl Henry, voice, cello; Yifei Marine Zhou, voice; Adrian Chabla, voice, piano,
Jacqui Armbruster, voice, viola; Evan Haskin, guitar

Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall

NEC COMMENCEMENT CONCERT

Saturday, May 18, 2024 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall

Upcoming Student Recitals at NEC

all programs subject to change

Visit necmusic.edu for complete and updated concert information

Hyelim Kong, *viola* (GD)

Student of Nicholas Cords

Saturday, May 11, 2024 at 7:30 p.m., Carriage House Violins

Andres Sanchez, *cello* (GD)

Student of Paul Katz

Sunday, May 12, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Burnes Hall

Support the future of music at NEC!

Your gift to The NEC Fund has a direct and immediate impact on student scholarships, NEC's world-class faculty, and a collaborative and innovative learning environment rooted in the highest level of musical excellence.

Please consider making a gift to support NEC at necmusic.edu/give.

Food and drink are not allowed in the concert hall,
and photography and audio or video recording are prohibited.
Assistive listening devices are available for all Jordan Hall concerts;
contact the head usher or house manager on duty or inquire at the Coat Room.
Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of management.

Stay connected



necmusic.edu/tonight