

Northwestern

BIENEN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

2024-25 SEASON



NUNC!6

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
NEW-MUSIC CONFERENCE

APRIL 25-27

Northwestern University

HENRY AND LEIGH
BIENEN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

NUNC! 6

Northwestern University New-Music Conference

presented by
The Institute for New Music

Alex Mincek, *director*

Ben Bolter, *associate director*

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Sorensen Jacobson Fund for New Music*

APRIL 25-27, 2025

Electroacoustic Performances

Chris Mercer, *director*

SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 2025, AT 4:30 P.M.

RYAN OPERA THEATER

***Improvisation in Quad* (2025)**

Ipek Eginli

Ipek Eginli, *piano*

***Serotonin Saturation* (2020, rev. 2024)**

**Mohammad H. Javaheri and
Francisco Javier Trabalón Ruiz**

***Cybersyn* (2021)**

Seth Andrew Davis

Heroic Dose

Dylan Ward, *saxophone*

Seth Andrew Davis, *electric guitar and laptop/electronics*

***Veils of Verities* (2024)**

Jyun-Rong Ho

***The Body-Worm* (2025)**

Jack Hamill

***Aloier-Abyme* (2024)**

Ben Zucker

PROGRAM NOTES

Improvisation in Quad

Eginli

Ipek Eginli's music is often described as adventurous, daring, playful, and vibrant. Witnessing her perform with piano and modular synthesizers offers a dynamic sonic exploration, as she smoothly shifts between organic and mechanical sounds while evoking a wide range of emotions—from tender and soft to dark and explosive. She explores contrasting gestures and textures through the convergence of acoustic and electronic sound, blurring and at times exaggerating the boundaries between the two to create surprising sonic illusions and interactions. Eginli's work incorporates influences from contemporary classical music, traditional and avant-garde piano techniques, and poly-modal structures, resulting in a captivating and multi-layered listening experience.

Serotonin Saturation

Javaheri and Ruiz

The core idea of *Serotonin Saturation* began to take shape in the spring of 2019, inspired by two related yet distinct impressions. One of these is serotonin syndrome, a condition characterized by excessive levels of serotonin accumulating in the body due to specific medications. Although serotonin is an important neurotransmitter that regulates mood, social behavior, and sexual desire, and relays messages between different areas of the brain, an excess can lead to agitation, restlessness, confusion, seizures, and even death. *Serotonin Saturation* imagines an overload of unstable thoughts filled with uncontrollable messages in the brain, occurring at both conscious and unconscious levels.

The second major aspect of the piece involves blocks, minimalistic silences, and sudden cuts which serve as a repetitive motif symbolizing undelivered messages and broken communication within different parts of the brain. The electronics in the composition primarily consist of processed sounds from the bass flute and human voice, both initially performed as raw sounds by Carin Levine and recorded by Philipp Schmalfuß. On top of this processed audio, Ivan Bushuev performed unprocessed flute sounds which were layered to create a blend of natural and processed timbres. This setup aims to create an authentic dialogue between the flute sounds and the electronics, demonstrating the inner and outer perspectives of voices between a being and its surroundings, including the inhuman.

Cybersyn

Davis

Cybersyn is an interactive improvising machine developed in Ableton by Seth Andrew Davis. The system utilizes a variety of objects in Ableton, Max/MSP, Max For Live, and a variety of VSTs. The system is made up of 50+ voices ranging from orchestral and acoustic instruments to synthesized sounds, drum machines, and no-input mixer that interact directly with a human agent in performance. *Cybersyn* sits within a tradition of interactive music systems that look to expand the scope of human-computer interaction into a more holistic and collaborative relationship. *Cybersyn* is developed around a cybernetic approach of listening, response, feedback, and interaction of human and computer agents in which both participants create together while maintaining freedom, autonomy, and independence. The improvising machine is a part of Davis's long form *Cybersyn* project, which includes a series of pieces for improvisers, live/interactive electronics, live video, and interactive 3D environments. *Cybersyn* is inspired by the project of the same name implemented by the Allende government in Chile in the 1970s, to create a computer system that aided in the management of the national economy. The project was never completed as the Pinochet Regime, with help from the CIA, overthrew the Allende government and was installed as a dictatorship in Chile. This performance with *Cybersyn* features the duo of Heroic Dose, with Dylan Ward on saxophones and Seth Andrew Davis on electric guitar and laptop/electronics.

Veils of Verities

Ho

In this era of information overload, we are surrounded by countless pieces of data every day. However, the authenticity of what we encounter often gives us pause. As we endlessly scroll through screens—browsing various news, articles, and social media posts—we must ask ourselves: Are we aware of the truths behind these streams of information? Are they objective facts or narratives painstakingly fabricated and manipulated for particular motives?

Every piece of news could be the product of filtering, embellishment, or even distortion. Seemingly flawless data or quotations may have been exaggerated or altered without our knowledge. Head-turning headlines might exist merely to serve certain agendas or interests. In this vast flood of information, how do we distinguish the real from the counterfeit, and how do we preserve our capacity for independent thought? These concerns invite reflection, for on the road to genuine understanding, we need more than just seeing to believe; we need deliberate and patient discernment.

Only by examining information with a critical eye can we discover that pearl of truth glinting in an ocean of mixed signals.

This composition reflects these ideas by blending field recordings and synthesizers.

Aloier-Abyme

Zucker

Aloier-Abyme is a performance for vibraphone and an Ableton Live set utilizing pitch and envelope tracking, LFOs, and granulation to shape improvised material itself subject to feedback from the amplification of the vibraphone. It was designed as a dynamic environment for solo performance, in which improvisation on the part of the performer is complemented by “improvisation” on the part of the system, in the sense of a series of emergent parameters related to live inputs. The title, using Old French terms for “alloy” and “abyss,” reflects the combinatorial duality of the performance, and its potential.

Since the majority of sound-affecting parameters are modulated by input, the live performer control is focused on adjusting the ranges by which these parameters may modulate. These are controlled by either a MIDI controller in real time, or programmed as a series of automations. Since these frameworks of pre-planning only affect ranges, they are a meta-form that maintains the liveness and unpredictability of the setup.

Aloier-Abyme was first performed in Iowa City in March 2024; a subsequent realization was released as part of the album *Alike Untils* (1473 Recordings, October 2024) with followup performances across Chicago and the Midwest.

Each performance entails a version tailored to the festival duration and space. In offering this work to each location, I hope to contribute to electroacoustic music discourses that concern topics of improvisation and cybernetics, as well as genre practices founded in non-academic environs including jazz, noise, ambient, and glitch musics. I also hope that the use of proprietary software points towards alternative notions of composition in decentralizing linear narrative and diagrammatic forms, and demonstrating the realities of interplay between available resources and musical ideas for a wider public interested in electroacoustic experimentation.

PROFILES

To view additional profiles for NUNC! 6, please visit the website at the QR code below:



INSTITUTE FOR NEW MUSIC

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Associate Director	Ben Bolter
Administrative Assistant	Chelsea Lyons
Graduate Assistant	Megan DiGeorgio

CONCERT MANAGEMENT OFFICE STAFF

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Supporting Staff	150 Northwestern Students
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KEYBOARD MAINTENANCE

Supervisor of Keyboard Maintenance	Wesley Owen
Piano Technician	Chris Scroggins

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the house manager. In consideration of the artists and other members of the audience, patrons who must leave before the end of the concert are asked to do so between pieces.
- Photography and audio/video recording of performances is strictly prohibited without prior written consent of the Concert Management Office.
- A limited number of assisted listening devices are available for the hearing impaired. Inquire at the box office.
- Smoking is prohibited by law in all Bienen School of Music performance venues.
- Every patron who will be occupying a seat must have a ticket in order to be admitted into the concert.
- The presenter reserves the right to ask any patron who is disrupting the event in any way to leave the concert hall.
- In the event of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher.
- When joining us for upcoming concerts, please leave the Concert Management Office phone number (847-491-5441) with anyone who might need to reach you in case of emergency.

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