

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

Keynote Presentation: Kirsten Speyer Carithers '17 PhD

SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2025, AT 4:00 P.M.

MCCLINTOCK CHORAL AND RECITAL ROOM

Hacking New Music: Lessons from the Archive

Postwar experimentalism provides an ideal conceptual playground for blending the history of work with the history of music. From designing groundbreaking notational systems to interrogating the very definition of music itself, creative sound-makers pushed the boundaries of acceptable ways to be musicians. These practices have shaped the development of a theoretical framework that I call “interpretive labor.” Each model in this framework demonstrates a unique but interrelated form of engagement with the work of being a contemporary musician.

In this talk, I share some models of Interpretive Labor, discussing not only how they have functioned in the past, but also how we might apply them to artistic practices today. As we navigate the challenges of precarity, austerity, inequity, and outright hostility toward creative thinking, we may benefit from a bit of the hacker ethos that became, in my view, one of the most fruitful outcomes of this era. With the boss-like Executive calling the shots, the Scientist exploring new ways of engaging with music and its technologies, the Administrator making sure events happen on time and on budget, the Hacker subverting a given system, and the Gamer making a new system entirely, all of these characters, and their characteristics, constitute a powerful system of working methods, which sheds light on creative labor more broadly.

Kirsten Speyer Carithers specializes in music of the 20th and 21st centuries, exploring the intersections between music and labor across a spectrum of performance practices. Research and teaching interests include music and technology, experimentalism, ludomusicology, and the connections between indeterminacy, improvisation, and creative labor. A frequent participant in national and international conferences, Carithers has presented her research at meetings of the American Musicological Society, the Society for American Music, and the Modernist Studies Association, as well as Perspectives on Musical Improvisation (University of Oxford, 2014) and Performing Indeterminacy (University of Leeds, 2017).

Pedagogical interests include representation in music history curricula, the relationships between music and technology, and tools/techniques to help students develop information literacy. Prior to joining the University of Louisville, she taught courses at The Ohio State University, the Capital University Conservatory of Music, and both the Bienen School of Music and School of Professional Studies at Northwestern University.

She holds a PhD in Musicology from Northwestern, along with graduate certificates in Teaching and Critical Theory. Her dissertation, “The Work of Indeterminacy: Interpretive Labor in Experimental Music,” won the 2017 Wiley Housewright Award from the Society for American Music. She also holds degrees in music history (MMus, 2005) and oboe performance (BMus, 2002) from Bowling Green State University.

PROFILES

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- 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.
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- 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.
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