

NEMF2025@EIU

Napoleon Electronic Music Festival 2025

Tuesday February 4, 2025

Eastern Illinois University - Doudna Fine Arts Center Theater

Concert 2 - 8pm

All works feature electronics and/or computer processing.

Form and Content

Barry Moon

Barry Moon, guitar

Waiting

Mark Phillips

Mark Phillips, EWI

Bell and Shor Take the Spinductor for a Walk

Xavier Davenport

Xavier Davenport, Spinductor and video

Miracle of Life

Casey O'Neal

Casey O'Neal, saxophone

Ingrained

Jonathan Wilson

Jonathan Wilson, saxophone; Joseph Norman, computer

Free Cell(((o)))

Brad Decker

Brad Decker, cello

Dream of Variation

James Mauck/Forebeat

James Mauck, drumset and electronics

Improvisation

Improvisers Exchange Ensemble

Jason Finkelman, director

Form and Content

Barry Moon

"Form and content" for guitar and computer was composed in October 2024. It is inspired by ideas put forth in "A Course of Love" that we are known to each other by our content rather than our form. Originally I wanted the piece to be purely improvised based on Machine Learning algorithms developed as part of the FluCoMa package, but it quickly became apparent that I wanted more control over the overall structure than this approach would provide, so I went with an approach I have used extensively, where the form is fixed and details are improvised in performance.

The way I see it, there are three "streams": 1, the live guitar, 2, an FM synthesized part, and 3, computer processing of streams 1 & 2. The FM synthesized part uses pitches that are determined by an analysis I developed to ascertain the tonal center of the guitar input. This is done by circular average of guitar pitches once they have been arranged by fifths. Both the rhythm and FM ratios of the synthesized part use prime numbers to allow maximum variation. There are a total of 6 sound processing algorithms and the guitar and synthesized inputs traverse these algorithms in reverse order.

Since retiring from a position as Associate Professor of Sonic Arts at Arizona State University in May 2024, **Barry** has been working on music for his own performance on guitar and computer and a collection of songs. He has become what some might call "born again"; realizing the importance of finding the Christ that dwells within us all. Prior to this (ongoing) transformation, he was as obsessed with notions of ego identification as most and took pride in the various activities one normally associated with having a "successful career". Not to downplay that career, as it took him around the globe to present his music at many festivals and conferences, and gave him with the opportunity to engage with many professionals and students with wonderful ideas on computer music performance. Nothing has changed from outward appearances, but he now looks at life as an opportunity to extend love rather than to call for it.

Waiting

Mark Phillips

"Waiting" employs a number of semi-autonomous algorithms guided and conducted during the performance by audio and MIDI data from my EWI. In addition, I will be responding to and interacting with some aspects of the Kyma algorithms. So Kyma is waiting for me; I'm waiting for (or anticipating) Kyma; and you are waiting for the piece to end.

Mark Phillips (Ohio University Distinguished Professor Emeritus) won the 1988 Barlow International Competition for Orchestral Music, leading to collaborations with conductor Leonard Slatkin. His Violin Power appears on the SEAMUS 2015 conference CD. The World Saxophone Congress commissioned and premiered his What If for 101 saxophones. His music has been performed at Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Wigmore Hall, the Festival Internacional de Música de Bogotá, the Blossom Music Festival, and numerous other festivals and conferences around the world. Commissioned for a Memphis premiere, his Dreams Interrupted has received performances across the country. He has received orchestra performances by groups such as the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, the NHK Radio Symphony Orchestra, and the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra — and has been recorded by Richard Stoltzman and the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, the Lark Quartet, and several solo artists. More information is available at <https://coolvillemusic.com/>

Mark Phillips, like so many of his generation, began his musical studies with lesson on piano. But they didn't take. As a trombonist, he achieved a modicum of early success before setting it aside to focus on composition. He didn't take up EWI until very late in his career. His notable achievements as an EWI player include performances at various festivals including KISS 2016, EABD 2019, EMM (2019 & 2024), NYCEMF 2022, MOXsonic 2024 and the Montauk Music Festival (2023 & 2024).

Bell and Shor Take the Spinductor for a Walk

Xavier Davenport

Endless calculation, inevitable evolution, artistic opportunity. The Spinductor is an instrument that allows users to harness quantum spin via magnets in their hands to create musical gestures with the electromagnetic field surrounding us. Musical material in this piece is generated using quantum algorithms which can be run using qubits – a fundamental unit of computation relying on spin. Rather than having direct control over the music, you instead use magnets to improvise probabilities affecting the timbre of the music. Every gesture through the instrument engages at least twelve dimensions of correlated musical parameters, which could in turn affect the tone-color of the sound, the pace of the music, the way it echoes, and more. The sounds are generated using a pre-trained neural network, and I do not know all the sounds that can be found using the instrument. Technological progress never ceases, providing new opportunities for exploration.

Xavier Davenport (b. 1995) writes music that is meticulously structured, technologically experimental, humorous, theatrical, often improvisatory, and sometimes entertaining.

Born in Ohio, he attended Wittenberg University where he was awarded the Sara Krieg Music Scholarship, and later the Huebner Scholarship. In his four years as an undergraduate student, he obtained degrees in Chinese language & culture, physics, and music. He next obtained a master's degree in electrophysics from the National Chiao-Tung University in 2020, then another master's degree in music composition in 2022 from DePaul University. Davenport is now working towards a DMA at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Miracle of Life

Miracle of Life is about the significance of our first heartbeat. Before we even look like humans and before we are born, our heart starts beating. From that moment on it never stops beating. Through our pain, joy, tears, laughter, loss, and life that heart keeps on beating. We are fortunate enough to be able to hear that heartbeat when a baby is still in the womb. That sound and moment is what I would like you to picture during the piece. The initial sound of a baby's heart beating, the emotion of watching a child grow up, and that never ending heart beat through it all.

The piece uses a max patch to send sound to 8 speakers around the room. As the performer plays, the sounds surround the audience and textures build. The performer controls the duration of the sound moving around the space and also how fast it moves from one speaker to the next. The piece has musical ideas written out to help the performer get started in each "cue" but the performer then improvises based off of the ideas written.

Casey O'Neal is the Technical Manager in the William & Mary Music Department. He holds a B.A. in Music from Georgia College and State University and an M.M. from The University of Georgia in Music Composition. Prior to his work at William & Mary, Mr. O'Neal worked as an audio engineer doing shows all over the Southeast United States and as the Assistant Director for the Dancz Center for New Music at The University of Georgia.

Mr. O'Neal's compositions stretch across many platforms. His chamber and solo works, both acoustic and electronic, have been heard around the world and are characterized as "stunning" and "inspiring." He has collaborated with Dr. Rachel Frederiksen at the University of Arkansas having a world premiere with his piece "From Ashes to Ascension". He was also commissioned by Dr. Nathaniel Gworek to compose the solo snare and fixed media piece, "Night Time Forest".

Ingrained

"Ingrained" is a collaborative work with Esther Lamneck. The title refers to the formation of a part of the essence of the inmost being and is reflected in the nature of the composition itself, the performance of which is "ingrained" in the tárogató, the principal sound source. The sonic environment of this composition is the result of superimposition. In the foreground there is an improvisational structure that is formed through the interaction between instrument and live electronics. The sounds in the live electronics are transformed primarily through granular synthesis via Max/MSP, and the grains are a part of the essence of the musical instrument, which are recorded and manipulated in real time. This is added to the fixed media, which is based on prior recordings of the tárogató that were improvisatory in structure and were subsequently manipulated and transformed primarily through granular synthesis.

Dr. **Jonathan Wilson**'s works have been performed at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, European Media Art Festival, the Experimental Superstars Film Festival, the Big Muddy Film Festival, ICMC, SICMF, SEAMUS, NYCEMF, NSEME, the Iowa Music Teachers Association State Conference, and the Midwest Composers Symposium. He is the winner of the 2014 Iowa Music Teachers Association Composition Competition. Jonathan has studied composition with Lawrence Fritts, Josh Levine, David Gompper, James Romig, James Caldwell, Paul Paccione, and John Cooper. In addition, studies in conducting have been taken under Richard Hughey and Mike Fansler. Jonathan is a member of Society of Composers, Inc., SEAMUS, ICMA, Iowa Composers Forum, and American Composers Forum.

Free Cell(((o)))

It's not every day that one happens to obtain a free cello. This cello was cast aside because of a hole in the back. The hole was caused by too much front pressure on the bridge, forcing the soundpost to puncture the rear of the instrument. Obviously I saw this as an opportunity to wire it up for electronics with a piezo. The cello has responded nicely, and seems to enjoy a new lease on life. At a time in which there is too much negativity, pressure, and exclusion, it has been my pleasure to accept this cello and its flaws, and give it a second chance to find its voice.

Casey O'Neal

Jonathan Wilson

Brad Decker

Brad Decker is a composer, educator, and performer of contemporary concert music, whose works often incorporate electronic, electroacoustic, or interactive media. His recent works explore the interaction of acoustic instruments and electronics to create immersive composite textures. His instrumental works combine virtuosic flourishes, polyrhythmic interplay, and extended techniques. Electronic elements include adventures in analog synthesis, interactive computer processing and sampling, multichannel diffusion, and fixed-media accompaniments. Multimedia projects range from traditional film soundtracks to live-performed improvisations with video. As a double bassist, he regularly performs his own compositions and improvisations that incorporate computer interactivity. His teachers include Peter Hestermann, Kenneth Jacobs, Erik Lund, Heinrich Taube, Steven Taylor, and Scott Wyatt. He has attended masterclasses and lessons with composers Agostino DiScipio, Stefano Gervasoni, Lee Hyla, and Tristan Murail. He is currently Assistant Professor of Composition and Music Technology at Eastern Illinois University. His music is distributed through his website www.braddecker.org.

Dream of Variation

James Mauck/Forebeat

Extended improvisation based on pieces from the Forebeat album, *Stages of Growth*.

Collective Composition

Improvisers Exchange Ensemble

Improvisers Exchange Ensemble is a student performance group of the University of Illinois School of Music, exploring “omni-idiomatic” improvised music. This concept offers musicians of all levels and stylistic backgrounds opportunity to create meaningful music together through improvisation. Ensemble members are introduced to wide ranging concepts and approaches to collective improvisation, as well as listening strategies that holistically enhance musicianship and creative production.

Jason Finkelman combines laptop electronics and acoustic instrumentation to create a distinct ambient, avant-world sound. A specialist on the single string musical bow berimbau, Finkelman is a Philadelphia-born percussionist who performs on African and Brazilian instruments handcrafted by Adimu Kuumba. His roots in improvised music include founding the trio Straylight in 1992, which enjoyed a wide range of collaborative performances in the Straylight Dialogues series at the Knitting Factory. Urbana-Champaign-based since 2000, Finkelman performs continually with a host of genre-blurring improvisers, is a community radio host at WEFT 90.1FM and leads the ever-evolving ensemble Kuroshio, which recently released an eponymous CD on Asian Improv Records (2020). Current collaborations include a duo project with Bourema Ouedraogo performing original songs informed by his musical origins in Burkina Faso, West Africa. As a composer for dance, Finkelman has collaborated with choreographer Cynthia Oliver for over twenty-nine years and received a “Bessie” award as a composer for her full evening work SHEMA (2000). At the University of Illinois, Finkelman directs Global Arts Performance Initiatives at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts and leads Improvisers Exchange, a performance ensemble of the School of Music.