

Concert 1, September 16, AIMC 2026

- **Wahrheit. Freiheit. Dummheit. Bosheit.** (Truth. Freedom. Stupidity. Malice.) by Oded Ben-Tal (Kingston University)
- **Distant Memories: A co-creative approximation to urban soundscape memory** by Anna Gatzoura (Postdoctoral researcher)
- **Orbits and Bodies: A Live Audiovisual Performance with Bespoke Machine Learning Instruments** by Bruna Guarnieri (Plantasia Space) & Gabriel Vigliensoni (Concordia University)
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- **Adaptive Real-Time Spatialization for Live Saxophone Improvisation** by Michael Ott (Conservatorium van Amsterdam, Amsterdam University of the Arts) & Atser Damsma (Conservatorium van Amsterdam, Amsterdam University of the Arts)
- **Compose/Decompose** by Erik Nystrom (City, University of London)
- **The Allegory of the Cave** by Thomas Boulousis (Kingston University London)

Wahrheit. Freiheit. Dummheit. Bosheit.

The piece – five songs with a fixed electronic accompaniment – explores a chain of transformations between text and music. The first link in the chain is Schumann's *Dichterliebe* – settings of poems by Heine (music ← text). The second link consists of textual descriptions of that song cycle, and in particular phrases that describe the music (text ← music). For the next link in the chain I turned to generative AI tools – I used the descriptions as prompts for music generation (music ← text). The resulting audiofiles, naturally, did not resemble Schumann's music in any way, shape, or form. Nevertheless, I found enough interesting material in there to compose the fixed ('tape') part for the piece. Heine's poetry is also the source text for the songs (music ← text). But rather than the lyric poetry that Schumann (and other composers) chose, I turned to his politically charged poems. These resonate powerfully with our current time across a gap of almost two centuries.

Considering that Heine himself was inspired by music, among other things, when he wrote his poetry we can summarise the chain of transformation as:

Ben-Tal(AI(Writers(Schumann(Heine(...))))Heine(...))

And if we include you, as you read these programme notes, we arrive at:

Reader(Ben-Tal(Ben-Tal(AI(Writers(Schumann(Heine(...))))Heine(...))))

Oded Ben-Tal

I am a composer with complementary research interests at the intersection of music, cognition, and computing. My compositions range from instrumental works to interactive pieces combining live performers with electronics, and include multimedia collaborations with artist from other domains such as video, dance, and visual design.

I studied composition with Jonathan Harvey and Brian Ferneyhough as part of my doctoral studies at Stanford University where I also worked with Jonathan Berger on research projects. Since 2016 I have been collaborating with Dr Bob Sturm applying machine learning and AI methods to music.

Distant Memories: A co-creative approximation to urban soundscape memory

Distant Memories is a human-AI interactive multichannel sound performance that experiments with the semantic relations of soundscape memories, as evoked through listening, and their evolution as a function of the evolution of time. It is based on an unsupervised machine learning algorithm that analyses a corpus of field recordings and transforms them to a latent space, to capture their

characteristics and similarities, which then uses in real time to identify the sound segments that will be used in the performance, further modified and mixed by the artist. Shaped by both the creative decisions of the human and the actions of the algorithm, exploring the physical and latent spaces, this performance presents every time unique soundscape compositions.

Anna Gatzoura is a research scientist and creative technologist, with a multidisciplinary background in computer engineering, AI and sound art, thus especially interested in the intersection of science, technology and art. In her artistic research, she navigates between sound and creative coding, delving into the realms of listening, sound perception and memory, through the lens of modern technologies. Her practice unfolds in performances and installations where she weaves together field recordings and algorithmic compositions, inviting listeners to unique and constantly evolving experiences. The author employs algorithmic techniques to analyse complex processes, decompose structures, and then uses them as a basis for spatial electroacoustic compositions. Her current research revolves around the computational perception of urban soundscapes, portraying expressions of historical memories and resonating with a sense of belonging and community. Furthermore, she investigates the potential of AI tools to support and extend human creativity when used as collaborative companions.

Orbits and Bodies: A Live Audiovisual Performance with Bespoke Machine Learning Instruments

Orbits and Bodies is a live audiovisual performance connecting exoplanet orbital data, embodied gestures, and bespoke music-making software to explore mediated musicianship and distributed agency. Structured in three continuous movements, the piece traverses sonic territories that move from environmental field recordings through rhythmic patterns and fractured sonorities to deep low-end frequencies. The performers implement bespoke systems for real-time audio generation and processing; use exoplanet orbital data as modulation streams; and track their gestures to control custom digital instruments. A salient feature is the explicit audiovisual feedback: control interfaces are video- projected into the space, allowing the audience to witness how gestures, mappings, and parameters articulate auditory and visual change. This “open process” approach positions explainability as part of the performance, co-producing intelligibility and trust through the public legibility of process.

Bruna Guarnieri is a sound artist and creative technologist based in Tenerife, Spain, working at the intersection of electronic music, generative systems, and world-building. She is the developer of Plantasia Space, a web-based platform for collaborative sound- and music-making that explores how speculative environments can be inhabited and reshaped through sound. Her practice combines field recording, generative audio, and interactive interface design to create immersive sonic experiences across performance, installation, and online formats.

Gabriel Vigliensoni is an electronic music artist, performer, and researcher whose work explores the creative affordances of machine learning in sound and music. His practice merges formal musical training with experience in sound recording, music production, music information retrieval, human–computer interaction, and machine learning to develop novel approaches to composition and performance. His creative work and research have been showcased at venues and conferences such as CCA, IRCAM, MUTEK, ICCA, IKLECTIK, ISEA, NIME, ICMC, and ISMIR. He earned a PhD in Music Technology from McGill University and is Assistant Professor in Creative Artificial Intelligence in the Department of Design and Computation Arts at Concordia University.

Adaptive Real-Time Spatialization for Live Saxophone Improvisation

This performance explores the transformation of the solo bass saxophone into a circumspectral soundscape through real-time audio decomposition. Using a custom Max system based on Non-

Negative Matrix Factorization (NMF), the sound of the saxophone is dynamically decomposed into separate spectral objects, which are then mapped to a multi-speaker setup based on their frequency content. Monophonic melodies remain localized, while multi-phonics expand to envelop the audience, with partials drifting between speakers and the saxophone's key clicks dispersing as independent percussive voices. The performer controls the spatialization with an expression pedal, enabling fluid transitions between localized sounds and immersive, multi-channel textures. This approach allows the performer to use the multi-speaker setup as an extension of the instrument, translating the sound of the improvisation into spatial placement and movement.

Michael Maria Ott (*1993) is a saxophonist, improviser, composer, and developer for live electronics. After completing his Bachelor's degree in Jazz Saxophone at the Mannheim University of Music and Performing Arts, he is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Live Electronics at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam. His work combines improvisation with complex digital systems, both in live performances and interactive installations.

Focusing on the intersection of humans, machines, and data, he develops interactive immersive systems that translate biological signals, environmental data, and gestures into sound and visual forms in real time. Using self-programmed algorithms and custom-built sensors, he creates non-linear interactions that expand traditional performance formats.

Compose/Decompose is a live-performed computer music work which exclusively uses sounds from Jonty Harrison's acousmatic piece *Pair/Impair* from 1978 (Harrison, 1996). The work uses machine learning and music information retrieval to organise sounds according to their spectromorphological properties. In this way *Compose/Decompose* seeks to add value to the acousmatic principle of a discourse guided by intrinsic properties of sounds, and investigate how electroacoustic composition craft can be reconstituted in the context of 21st century technology

Erik Nystrom is a composer of electroacoustic works, live computer music, and sound installations, using multichannel sound projection, generative algorithms, improvised performance and acousmatic sound. Theorist on sound and space in electroacoustic and computer music composition. Lecturer in Music at City, University of London.

The Allegory of the Cave

Deep inside a dark cave, strange prisoners are chained so that they can only see shadows cast on a wall by a fire behind them. One prisoner is freed and, though initially blinded by the firelight, slowly adapts. Emerging outside, he learns to understand reflections, earthly objects, the night sky, and finally the sun itself. Wanting to share this truth, he returns to the cave, but the others reject the revelation and ultimately kill him. Thus unfolds the narrative of Plato's famous allegory, which invites us to ponder the nature of knowledge and education. This story serves as the source material for this programmatic composition for solo violin. I used a music AI tool prompted with recordings of two melodies representing the cave and the outside world, alongside AI-generated text describing shadows on the cave walls or entities encountered outside. The AI system produced short audio fragments that I curated, transcribed, and transformed, to form the musical substance of the work. In this way, I explored how generative AI can mediate between text and music by enabling new ways of engaging with literary narrative.

Thomas Boulousis is a composer, violinist, pianist, and researcher currently undertaking a PhD in Music at Kingston University London, supported by a competitive Technē AHRC studentship. His research explores contemporary narrative music composition integrating generative artificial intelligence. He holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music with Distinction from City, University of London, where he received a Performance Scholarship, the Music Department Prize for Overall Achievement, and the Worshipful Company of Musicians Prize. He also holds the

LTCL, LMusTCL, and LRSM Diplomas. His work has gained international recognition, including nominations and distinctions at the Marvin Hamlisch International Music Awards in New York, the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, the 3rd International Composition Competition “Nikolaos Mantzaros”, and the 1st Composition Competition “Vicky Stylianou” in Greece. Alongside his research, he works as a composer and sound designer, performs as a violinist and pianist, and teaches at Merton Music Foundation in London.

Poems by Heinrich Heine, used in **Wahrheit. Freiheit. Dummheit. Bosheit.** by Oded Ben-Tal

	I	
Wohl durch den Nebel, wohl über den Schnee Kam langsam der Zug gezogen. Misstönend schauerlich war die Musik. Wehmütig grüßten mich Die Adler der Standarten. Und die Freiheit hat sich den Fuss verrenkt, Kann nicht mehr springen und stürmen		On through mist, on over snow, On went the funeral march. The music was painfully out of tune, The eagles on the standards Looked nostalgic and morose And Freedom has sprained her foot, she lost, For springing and charging, all powers
Die Wahrheit schwindet von der Erde, Auch mit der Treu' ist es vorbei. Die Hunde wedeln noch und stinken Wie sonst, doch sind sie nicht mehr treu. Ich zweifle auch, ob sie empfindet, Die Nachtigall, das, was sie singt; Sie übertreibt und schluchzt und trillert Nur aus Routine, wie mich dünkt.	II	Truth is vanishing from the world, And there is no loyalty any more. Dogs still wag their tail and stink, But are not loyal, like before. I also doubt whether the nightingale Feels what she is singing about; She exaggerates, sobs and trills, Purely out of routine, I have no doubt.
Zwar beendet ist der Krieg, Doch die Kriegsgerichte blieben, und es heisst, du habest einst viel Erschiessliches geschrieben. Taurig schau ich in die Höh, Wo viel tausend Sterne nicken — Aber meinen eignen Stern Kann ich nirgends dort erblicken. Hat im güldnen Labyrinth Sich vielleicht verirrt am Himmel, Wie ich selber mich verirrt In dem irdischen Getümmel	III	Though the war is at an end, Military courts are not, And you wrote, I understand, Things for which you could be shot. Mournfully I scan the sky: Twinkling stars uncountable! Nowhere to be seen is my Private star, my personal. In that golden maze I fear Overhead it's gone astray: In the earthly tumult here I myself have lost my way.
Nicht übel gefiel mir das neue Kostüm Der Reuter, das muss ich loben, Besonders die Pickelhaube, den Helm Mit der stählernen Spitze nach oben. Das ist so rittertümlich und mahnt An der Vorzeit holde Romantik Nur fürcht ich, wenn ein Gewitter entsteht, Zieht leicht so eine Spitze Herab auf euer romantisches Haupt Des Himmels modernste Blitze!	IV	I liked the cavalry's new costume; To praise it would only be right, Especially the impressive spike-helmet, With its point of steel upright. This is chivalric, reminding The past, noble and romantic My only fear, in case of storm, The sky will be drawn by your spike, And, straight upon your romantic head, The most modern lightning will strike!
Die Flamme des Scheiterhaufens hat hier Bücher und Menschen verschlungen; Die Glocken wurden geläutet dabei Und Kyrie eleison gesungen. Dummheit und Bosheit buhlten hier Gleich Hunden auf freier Gasse; Die Enkelbrut erkennt man noch heut An ihrem Glaubenshasse.	V	Here men and books were burnt at the stake And, by its flames were swallowed, Meanwhile the bells merrily rang And a “Kyrie Eleison“ followed. Stupidity and malice here, Like street-dogs, used to mate. One can still tell their progeny today By their sectarian hate.