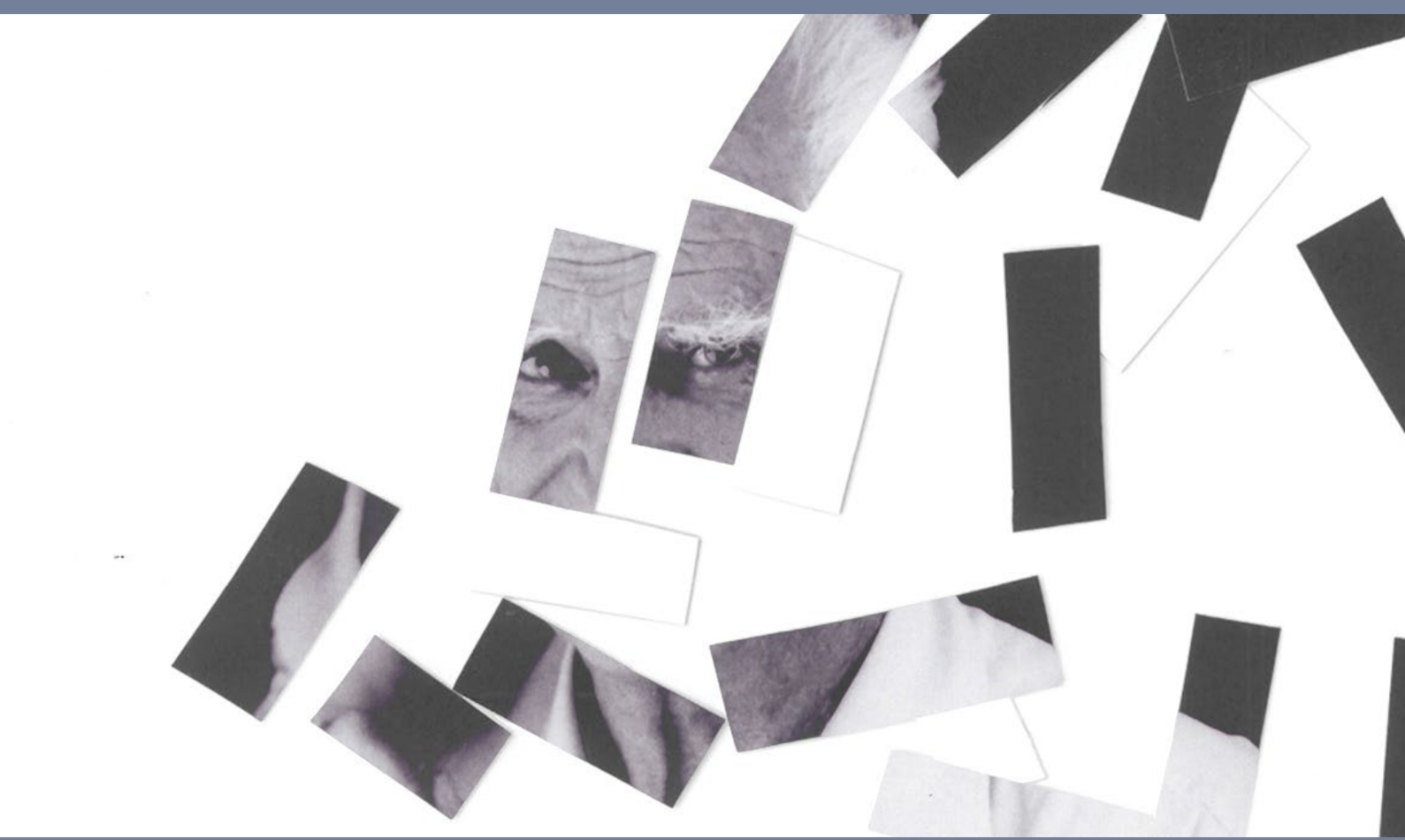
Orpheus Instituut

EVENT

Michel Serres: Music and Noise, Waves and Rhythm

Orpheus Instituut,
Korte Meer 12,
9000 Ghent (BE)

November 12-14, 2026



Michel Serres: Music and Noise, Waves and Rhythm

Michel Serres (1930 – 2019) stood as a unique and vital voice. Nominally a philosopher of science, his vast output addresses all aspects of contemporary thought and life: the relationships of the human with themselves, with each other, with their thought, culture, technology and environment. Serres' thought resists reduction to a brand, to a concept©; it is a guided invitation to see, to understand, to act in new ways. He describes his thought as relational, procedural, rather than declarative. Serres' navigating of new paths is inherently cross-disciplinary, and his ethos of thinking with rather than about our companion life-forms is essentially post-human. In the polyphony of his topics there is coherence as he identifies patterns, isomorphisms and figures as vehicles for his investigation.

Music is a continuous presence: from specific discussions in Hermès and The Birth of Physics, through the conflictual relationship described in The Parasite, the investigation of hearing and music in The Five Senses, to Serres'



exposition of its fundamental place in his late Musique and the revealing of his early ambition to become a composer. Music is the summation of all the arts. It precedes language and science; it calls into question received modes of knowledge. Like all forms of life, music receives, stores, processes and emits information.

Noise is also everywhere, a pregnant, constantly-bifurcating constant – "the background noise of the world", "the first object of metaphysics", the source of energy from which signals might be heard, from which resonances with other objects might emerge: "no logos without noise... Noise is the basic element of the software of all our logic"

Waves emerge to bring rhythm to the universe. They are the constant movement that radiates from every action, every thought, the waves that interfere with each other to produce new patterns, disturbances or echoes, those of the wind or the sea – another foundational element in Serres' world.

Serres' isomorphologies run beyond specific references; these elements become constant operators in his thought. This symposium will consider the crucial role of music in Serres' work, and the relevance of his thought to current and future musical thought and practice. As well as the explicit place of music in Serres' writings and life, we hope to explore the ways in which music could be seen as a further character in his community of figures, how aspects of his work could be understood as musical, and how musicians might find models for their own thought in his writing.

Jonathan Impett
Orpheus Instituut
Music, Thought and Technology

Thursday 12 November 2026

Time	Concert hall
13:30 - 13:45	**Registration**
13:45 - 14:00	**Welcome**
14:00 - 15:30	**Paper session 1** Chair: Zeynep Toraman **Wiebe Koopal** — *Finding a Voice amidst the Noise: Michel Serres Listening to Francis Poulenc's La voix (in)humaine* **Kevin Hunt** — *Music, Poetry, and the Language of Slow Portraiture: Michel Serres and the Rhythms of Real Time in Emily Andersen's Somewhere Else Entirely* **Elena Peytchinska / Thomas Ballhausen** — *The Murmur of a Book: Music, Time, and Body in Serres' "Biogée"*
15:30 - 16:00	**Coffee break**
16:00 - 17:30	**Paper session 2** Chair: Juan Parra Cancino **Rin Takahashi** — *La mathématique d'Orphée : musique et bruit chez le premier Michel Serres* **Peter Nelson** — *Against Harmony: Music as a radical figure of thought in the crisis of planetary health* **Anthony Gritten** — *Music, Ecology, Entropy: Reading Cage's Plant Pieces through Serres*
17:30 - 18:00	**Break**
18:00 - 19:00	Keynote 1 **Rick Dolphijn** — *From Euterpe to Erato: The Earth in Resonance Today*
19:00 - 20:00	**Break**
20:00 - 22:00	**Performances 1** **Uliana Bychenkova** — *The Dark Continent of Noise. A Feminist Politics of Excess* **Lemmo** — *Sound Parasite* **Michel Kessler** — *Acherontic Waves* **Vittoria Quartataro** — *upon winged boxes*

Friday 13 November 2026

Time	Concert hall
09:00 - 11:00	**Paper Session 3** Chair: Bruno Forment **Danilo Mandic** — *Resonant ordering: noise, music, law* **Gemma Jolliffe** — *Interpreting wind-sound and mobilising turbulence through Serres' Genesis* **Jonathan Impett** — *"La Musique n'est pas un savoir, mais un puits d'où sortent toutes les inventions possibles"* **Zeynep Toraman** — *The Interrupted Feast: On Aurality, Polyphony, and Parasitism*
11:00 - 11:30	**Coffee break**
11:30 - 12:30	Keynote 2 **Élie During** — *Music's vertical embrace: time and the inhuman*
12:30 - 14:00	**Lunch** *(first floor)*
14:00 - 15:30	**Paper session 4** Chair: Magno Caliman **Paulo De Assis** — *Footnote 27: Deleuze, Guattari, Serres, and the Epistemology of the Anexact* **Lucas Braga** — *Looking inside the furnace: noise, music, myth, and the "acoustic turn"* **Hans Kretz** — *Rendering a Shared World Audible: Music-making, Mediation, and Collectivity*
15:30 - 16:00	**Break**
16:00 - 17:00	Keynote 3 **Lucie K. Mercier** — *Multi-modal thinking: Harmony and the Cosmos*
17:00 - 17:30	**Break**
17:30 - 19:30	**Performances 2** **Juan Parra Cancino** — *Reconstructing the Parasite: Jaap Vink, Feedback Performance, and Michel Serres' Philosophy of Noise* **Burak Korkmaz Schwichow** — *The Third Audible and Orpheus in the Hum* **Sharon Phelan** — Citizens United: A Speech Act **Richard Craig** — *Michel Serres and the ur-musician*
19:30 - 20:00	**Break**
20:00	**Dinner (in house)**

Saturday 14 November 2026

Time	Concert hall
09:00 - 10:00	**Paper Sessions 5** **Violaine Boutet de Monvel** — *The Visual Parasite: Noise, Recursion, and Creative Emergence from Video Synthesis to Generative AI* **Michael Castelle** — *Bottou Implements Serres: Originary Noise in the the Training Processes of 21st-Century AI*
10:00 - 11:00	**Performances 3** **Boryeon Choi** — *Sonic Metamerism and the Voices Between Species* **Kevin Toksöz Fairbairn** — *Paraphone*
11:00 - 11:30	**Coffee break**
11:30 - 12:30	Keynote 4 **Steven Connor** — *Sing with Understanding Also: The Operation of Angels*
12:30 - 13:00	**Wrap-up**

Keynotes



Keynote 1 Rick Dolphijn

From Euterpe to Erato: The Earth in Resonance Today

Thursday 12 November, 18:00 – 19:00 · Concert Hall

Michel Serres's Music stages the unfolding of an Earth that comes into being through resonance. In this account, harmony names the provisional forms through which such a world becomes recognisable and inhabitable, while counterpoint names the coexistence of heterogeneous rhythms, temporalities, and forces that resist reduction to a single order. Artistic practice becomes decisive where recognition fails: by playing with dissonance in its different forms, it enables us to understand the world otherwise. This keynote concludes by considering contemporary sound art that addresses an Earth in crisis as a practice of such disclosure—an experimental reorganisation of attention capable of making inaudible material processes, damaged ecologies, and more-than-human temporalities perceptible.

Bio

Rick Dolphijn is a writer, teacher, and curator working at the intersection of philosophy, ecology, and the arts. He is associate professor at Utrecht University. His research engages continental philosophy and materialist thought, with a focus on earth, sound, and more-than-human relations. At this conference, he examines Michel Serres's understanding of music as a material, planetary force grounded in the dynamics of the Earth.



Keynote 2 Élie During

Music's vertical embrace: time and the inhuman

Friday 13 November, 11:30 – 12:30 · Concert Hall

Music, as Günther Anders suggested, does not pull us out of the world in the way fiction might. Rather, it retunes us to a world that is itself already constituted as vibration and resonance—including dimensions of that world that exceed the scale of human perception and duration. Music connects us to the world, but also to what, within the world itself, remains inaccessible or disproportionate to us: the inaudible, the imperceptible, the inhuman scales of time.

This double movement is particularly striking in Serres' thought, where the musical reference is marked by a polarity, perhaps even an ambivalence. On the one hand, there is the Orphic aspiration to connect human music with cosmic figures of universal resonance—musica mundi. The universe is polyphonic: it is woven from rhythms and harmonic relations that answer one another across different scales, from oscillations at the infra-molecular level to the great astronomical cycles, passing through the stacked or entangled rhythms of living bodies—described by Serres as veritable "banks of time." The work of modulation and variation of sonic matter in modern and contemporary music—from Wagner and Debussy to spectral music and electronic sound synthesis, through Xenakis and Messiaen—testifies to the persistence of this Orphic theme. From this point of view, music performs a function comparable to that of religion: it is a great provider of "vertical embraces" (accolades), bringing different times and orders into communication.

But at the same time, music is where the vertiginous sense of a fundamental disproportion between these scales is felt most strongly. These scales envelop the human while also exceeding it, receding from it, escaping its grasp: in the realm of micro-perceptions, at the threshold of the inaudible, but also in the immeasurable vastness of deep time, punctuated by infinitely stretched rhythms. Music has a sublime of its own; it calls for an ecstatic disposition in the listener, one that connects us to the dimension of the unrelatable, the incommunicable.

We will try to show that certain characteristic devices of the polyphonic tradition revolve precisely around this ambivalence, beginning with the familiar procedure of augmentation—a reduced model, a kind of musical maquette, offering a glimpse of dimensions of existence unfolding in an

inhuman time. Such procedures open onto temporal scales that exceed our ordinary temporal niche and blur the distinction between succession and simultaneity—an intimation of vertical time.

Bio

Élie During is Associate Professor of Philosophy at University Paris Nanterre and also teaches at the European Graduate School. He specializes in contemporary French thought (from Bergson to Serres), with a focus on the philosophical and wider cultural implications of the concept of simultaneity at the crossroads of science, metaphysics, and the arts. His publications range from critical editions of Bergson and Bachelard to studies of time and relativity theory, an essay on images, a book on retrofuturism, and a work of fiction inspired by Glenn Gould. More recently, he has published Deleuze en douze figures : bréviaire des personnages conceptuels (De l'Incidence Éditeur, 2026) and L'Image-volume : scènes de la vie augmentée (Éditions MF, 2026). He is currently working on an essay on Bach's Art of Fugue.



Keynote 3 Lucie K. Mercier

Multi-modal thinking: Harmony and the Cosmos

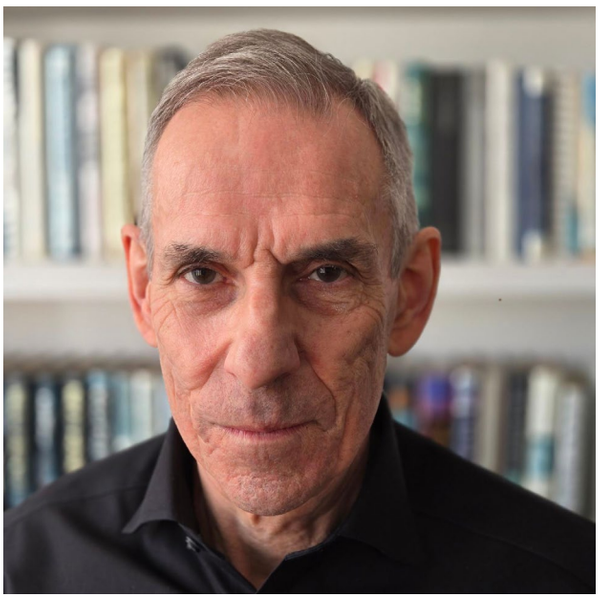
Friday 13 November, 16:00 – 17:00 · Concert Hall

Lucie Kim-Chi Mercier's talk will focus on Serres's early analyses of the role of music and harmony in Leibniz's philosophy, and how the latter continued to operate, albeit in a radically transformed form, in his later philosophy.

in his doctoral dissertation Le Système de Leibniz et ses modèles mathématiques (1968), Serres shows that Leibniz viewed music as a paradigm for perception, and that it is not by chance that he described the metaphysical world through the concept of « harmony ». He argues that Leibniz conceived the relationship between confused auditory perceptions and codified harmony as a heuristic analogon for the relationship between « small perception » and knowledge. After demonstrating the centrality of music in Serres's early reading of Leibniz, and how this was stylistically transcribed into Serres's own poetico-mathematical writing style, she will examine the returns of « harmony » in some of Serres's later works. In those writings, she will demonstrate that while Serres ceaselessly criticised Leibniz's conception, he also continuously dialogued with it in order to devise his own, « musical » conception of knowledge.

Bio

Lucie Kim-Chi Mercier is a Researcher in Philosophy affiliated with the LLCP, Department of Philosophy at Paris 8-Saint-Denis, and a member of the Radical Philosophy collective. She obtained her PhD from the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, at Kingston University (UK). She has published extensively on Michel Serres's earliest philosophy, focusing especially on Serres's ties with French structuralism and with the French epistemological tradition more generally: « The History of Truth : Serres, Canguilhem, Foucault » (Parrhesia 40, 2026), and « Michel Serres's Leibnizian Structuralism », (Angelaki 24 (6), 2019). Her current research attends to the various forms of « dramaturgies » at play in Frantz Fanon's writings, with a monograph provisionally titled « Frantz Fanon, theatrum philosophicum » in preparation.



Keynote 4 Steven Connor

Sing with Understanding Also: The Operation of Angels

Saturday 14 November, 11:30 – 12:30 · Concert Hall

I will bring together two of Michel Serres 's recurrent preoccupations through his work: with angels and with music. Angels have performed various different functions in the religious imagination: as messengers, intelligences, comforters, combatants and bureaucratic functionaries. But it seems that they only began to become musical from the late medieval period onwards. I will intimate how intersections of angels and music in Michel Serres 's work bring music into concordance with glory, violence, noise, intelligence and terror. Yet this cosmic expansiveness seems to mean that Serres is oddly and sadly silent about the indelible pathos of music.

Bio

Steven Connor is Professor of English at Kling's College, London, and Grace 2 Professor of English in the University of Cambridge. He is the author of more than twenty books on many different topics in literary and cultural history, including, most recently, *A History of Asking* (London: Open Humanities Press, 2023), Dreamwork: *Why All Work is Imaginary* (London: Reaktion/Chicago University Press, 2023), *Styles of Seriousness* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2023), *Gaston Bachelard: An Intellectual Biography* (London: Reaktion, 2025) and *Exorbitance: A Grammar of Overdoing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2026).

Sessions

Paper session 1

Thursday 12 November, 14:00 – 15:30 · Concert Hall

Chair: Zeynep Toraman

Wiebe Koopal — *Finding a Voice amidst the Noise: Michel Serres Listening to Francis Poulenc's La voix (in)humaine*

Kevin Hunt — *Music, Poetry, and the Language of Slow Portraiture: Michel Serres and the Rhythms of Real Time in Emily Andersen's Somewhere Else Entirely*

Elena Peytchinska / Thomas Ballhausen — *The Murmur of a Book: Music, Time, and Body in Serres' "Biogée"*

Finding a Voice amidst the Noise: Michel Serres Listening to Francis Poulenc's La voix (in)humaine

Wiebe Koopal

« C'était un vrai supplice de t'entendre à travers tout ce monde. »

By engaging in a 'Serresian reading' of Francis Poulenc's (and Jean Cocteau's) opera La voix humaine, this paper aims to develop a fresh, contemporary, and emancipatory account of the human voice. Its point of departure is Michel Serres' notion of "suffrage". Elaborated in Rome: the First Book on Foundations, this denotes a process of vocal emancipation that both precedes and exceeds any kind of "substantial", socio-political ordering of the voice, in terms of discourse, meaning or—most concretely—voting. For Serres, singing, vocal music, and even music in general, are highly concentrated instances and practices of such vocal emancipation. As we literally hear in Poulenc's Sprechgesang monologue La voix humaine, they are exquisitely capable of exploring the limits of linguistic, rational, and political discourse. Yet, equally of finding creative and liberating ways to expose these anew to the chaotic, a-significant "noise" that continues to rage outside—and inside—of them. According to our Serresian reading, which also involves Plato, Heidegger, and Cavarero as dialogue partners, La voix humaine stages this turbulent process of emancipation along four axes: the voice as desire and relation (1); the voice as expression of truth (2); the body of the voice (3); and the voice's inhumanity (4). Ultimately, we will argue, though musical vocality cannot utopically replace discourse (which inevitably 'adopts' music for its own purposes), it is a powerful and irreducible means (or milieu, in Serres' vocabulary) for suspending discourse's legitimacy, and for allowing excluded noises to emerge as new, transformative voices.

Bio

Wiebe Koopal works as a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at both LUCA School of Arts (campus Lemmens, Music Education) and KULeuven (Laboratory for Education, Culture and Society). He holds a PhD in Educational Sciences (Philosophy of Education) and specializes in theoretical research about music and arts education as a public good, in both formal and non-formal settings. As such, his work tries to mediate between educational theory, music pedagogy, music theory, and aesthetics. He has published on Serres before; other authors dominating his work are Plato, Adorno, and Deleuze.

Music, Poetry, and the Language of Slow Portraiture: Michel Serres and the Rhythms of Real Time in Emily Andersen's Somewhere Else Entirely

Kevin Hunt

This presentation focuses upon the debut film by renowned photographic portraitist Emily Andersen, titled Somewhere Else Entirely (2024). Andersen's film portrait of the poet, Ruth Fainlight, focuses upon voice and poetry as the basis for imagery and form. Andersen felt the audience needed to hear the poet speak, prompting her to expand her photographic practice from stills to film, through the necessity of adding time and sound. This paper will consider how Michel Serres' interest in noise, music, voice, and language provides a structure for understanding Andersen's film as a poetic work of slow portraiture. Serres positions music and rhythm, including music and rhythm of the voice, as intermediaries between the noise of the world and the conventional language of rationality (Serres 2016, 2012; Serres and Schehr 1983; Watkin 2020)

Andersen's process involved listening closely to Fainlight, creating her film portrait within the longue dureé, and drawing upon Fainlight's poetry as a compositional model. The film is non-linear and employs a fixed camera with long takes, tacitly drawing upon slow cinema and the musicality, pacing, and rhythm found in the work of artists such as Chantal Akerman. The content folds backwards, forwards and across time and space, embracing qualities that align with Serres' notion of topological percolation (Serres 2017; Watkin 2020). With consideration of poetry as a form of language that intuitively draws upon rhythm, and the ways in which Andersen's film develops a new language for her portraiture practice, this paper will argue that Somewhere Else Entirely captures the essence of "real time" discussed by Serres, drawn from the unpredictable rhythms of life and identified as the time we encounter if we seek "to remain faithful to the things themselves" (Serres 2017; Watkin 2020).



Bio

Dr. Kevin J. Hunt is Director of Doctoral Programmes for Nottingham School of Art & Design, Nottingham Trent University, UK. His research focuses upon culture and the senses. Recent work includes film philosophy and cultural studies research exploring the senses 'beyond the visual,' including through consideration of visual media such as painting, film, and photography, and collaborative work exploring audio description as a living practice for contemporary art. His work draws upon the sensorial philosophy of Michel Serres. He has published articles in research journals such as: Body & Society, Film Philosophy, Afterimage, Senses of Cinema, and Continuum.

The Murmur of a Book: Music, Time, and Body in Serres' "Biogée"

Elena Peytchinska / Thomas Ballhausen

Michel Serres is well known for the poetic and musical quality of his writing, a quality that has, paradoxically, complicated the reception of his thought within philosophical and scientific discourse, while making it particularly inspiring for art- and practice-based research. This paper proposes that the musicality of Serres' language is not merely stylistic ornament but is structurally inseparable from the content of his thinking: that in his work, "how" something is written and "what" is written are inextricably entangled. We argue this through two interlocking lenses: his conception of time and his understanding of writing as embodied practice, taking "Biogée" (2010) as our primary site of investigation.

Serres approaches time as he does space: as a topological formation, folding back on itself, percolating through unexpected channels, moving in eddies and counter-currents rather than a single directed flow. This temporal complexity finds its most adequate expression in the rhythms of language itself: Serres' sentences enact what they describe, emerging and dissipating like waves, never settling into predictability. This rhythmic instability is also corporeal. For Serres, writing is an embodied practice rooted in the pace of the walker and the rhythm of the hand. The body's movement flows directly into the text, making Serresian writing an act of participation in, rather than representation of, the world.



With "Biogée" (2010) Serres coins a new name for the entanglement of life and earth, giving voice, literally, to the manifold of non-human actors with whom humans share the world. Significantly, the book was published simultaneously in three formats: as audiobook, printed text, and digital edition, intentionally enacting the three stages of the book's own history: oral, printed, and numeric. In doing so, "Biogée" does not merely argue for a musical, practice-based mode of thinking, but it performs it.

Bios



Elena Peytchinska is a researcher, visual and performance artist. She studied violin at the University Mozarteum Salzburg and Stage and Film Design at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, where she is currently a lecturer. She holds a PhD from the Institute of Language Arts at the same university.

Thomas Ballhausen is a poet, philosopher, curator, and Head of the Interuniversity Organization Arts & Knowledges at the University Mozarteum Salzburg. He holds PhDs in philosophy and language arts. Together, Elena and Thomas have explored Michel Serres' oeuvre across numerous international conferences, articles, and exhibitions. Notably, their book series "Fauna", "Flora", "Fiction Fiction" (De Gruyter 2018–2023), informed by Serres' thinking, experiments with the relation of noise and language and speculative scientific systems through practice-based research.

Paper session 2

Thursday 12 November, 16:00–17:30 · Concert hall

Chair: Juan Parra Cancino

Rin Takahashi — *La mathématique d'Orphée : musique et bruit chez le premier Michel Serres*

Peter Nelson — *Against Harmony: Music as a radical figure of thought in the crisis of planetary health*

Anthony Gritten — *Music, Ecology, Entropy: Reading Cage's Plant Pieces through Serres*

The Mathematics of Orpheus: Music and Noise in the Early Work of Michel Serres

Rin Takahashi

In The Five Senses (1985), Michel Serres portrays Orpheus as an artist traversing noise. But what, in theoretical terms, does Orpheus do when he produces music in the face of noise? This underexplored question finds a rigorous answer in Serres's doctoral thesis, Le Système de Leibniz et ses modèles mathématiques (1968), through its account of "mathematics in infra-consciousness."

Drawing on Leibniz's theory of knowledge, Serres examines noise and order while rejecting any simple dualism. Taking up the idea that music is a virtual arithmetical exercise of a soul unaware that it is counting, he divides infra-consciousness into "noise as pure multiplicity" and "virtual calculation," thus establishing, in effect, a ternary relation. While excessive noise causes the mind to fade, a domain of unconscious information processing lies between this fading and distinct consciousness. In direct contact with noise, this domain is where beauty and reason take shape. For Serres, its general structure is mathematically constructed. Music thus becomes the paradigm for an expanded concept of mathematics as the necessary mediation between noise and order—a structure embodied by Orpheus.

This framework offers fruitful perspectives on contemporary musical practice. The advent of AI, enabling a potentially unlimited proliferation of music, creates a new situation of overflowing noise. Far from an anomaly, this algorithmic chaos is, through a Serresian lens, the very precondition for music's emergence. This paper draws out the key implications of this philosophy for rethinking creation in an age of advanced technologisation.



Bio

Rin Takahashi graduated from the Faculty of Environment and Information Studies at Keio University and is currently a second-year master's student in the Graduate School of Letters at the same university. His research focuses on contemporary French philosophy, particularly Michel Serres, as well as early modern philosophy, especially Leibniz. He is particularly interested in the relationship between mathematical thought and the interpretation of Leibniz in Michel Serres's early work.

Against Harmony: Music as a radical figure of thought in the crisis of planetary health

Peter Nelson

Michel Serres, in his writing, both represents and argues for an understanding of phenomena as emergent and relational, dynamic and processual. His valorisation of sound over vision recognises that the world is not bathed in sound as it is bathed in light; that there is no sonic equivalent of 'darkness', and the fact that we hear without the aid of a source of sonic 'illumination' gives sound an inherent energetic quality, unbeholden to any extraterrestrial power source. Every sound is evidence of a particular, earthly vitality, and the provenance and impact of these vitalities create fields of audition that Serres represents as noise and figure, waves and rhythm. This paper seeks to interrogate Serres' notion of music, arising out of these fields as a metaphysical image of 'harmony' within a relational economy of thought, by considering the place of music, in a fragile planet beset by crisis and degradation, within a regime of friction, as theorised by Anna Tsing. In particular, the material and relational aspects of time and rhythm will be explored in order to present a view of the metaphysical nature of sound and music, in a degraded world, as one which is plural; where divergent ontologies can coexist and sometimes collide with productive effect, not seeking a harmonic whole but rather acknowledging the indissoluble effects of rupture. The hope is that the notion of planetary health, espoused by Serres, can indeed benefit from a music that emerges through negotiation, care, and maintenance, grounded in shared damage and vulnerability rather than an unlikely, utopian return to primordial wholeness.



Bio

Peter Nelson is emeritus Professor of Music and Technology at the University of Edinburgh, UK. He is a composer, and has written about various aspects of music including articles and book chapters on listening, rhythm, time, and the work of Iannis Xenakis.

Music, Ecology, Entropy: Reading Cage's Plant Pieces through Serres

Anthony Gritten

Much of Serres' work, ranging from his earlier work on Hermes and communication through his theory of the Parasite to his later proposal of a Natural Contract, presupposes a physical set that can be understood in thermodynamic terms. Serres himself frequently uses thermodynamic terms, triangulating between energy, entropy, noise, and rhythm in ways that are very suggestive for music discourse.

In this paper I will focus on the second of these terms, entropy, as a means of reading a certain momentary history of experimental music: namely, the practice focussed around Cage in New York during the mid-1970s and manifest specifically in Cage's own works for various groupings of plant materials: Child of Tree, Branches, and Inlets. My specific interest in reading Cage through Serres (and therefore Serres through Cage) is in exploring four areas of extensive overlap:

1) between Cagean improvisation and Serres' theory of quasi-objects.

2) between Cage's ecological concern (figured historically around the OPEC oil crisis but philosophically around Thoreau's environmentalism) and Serres' vision of the human in The Natural Contract and Biogea.

3) between Cage's juxtaposition of ecology and death in his experimental improvisations, which require the death of the instrument both metaphorically (the rethinking of expertise and mastery) and empirically (extracting the plants from their natural habitats for the performance and leaving them to die afterwards), and Serres' turn to (neg)entropy as a means of understanding the dynamics of life and information.

4) between Cagean performance without expertise / mastery and Serres' post-humanism.

Just as, half a century on, Cage's plant pieces still challenge hubristic assumptions about presence, subjectivity, being, and action, and still offer relevant ways of cohabiting the planet with other-than-human species, so, today, a post-Cageian Serresian reading of experimental music discourse affords interesting details of what this future cohabitation might entail.



Bio

Anthony Gritten works at the Royal Academy of Music, London. He has published articles on numerous issues in Music Performance Studies, including artistic research, collaboration, distraction, empathy, entropy, ergonomics, gesture, indeterminacy, listening, notation, pleasure, problem solving, technology, timbre and voice, along with articles on Adorno, Bakhtin, Cage, Debussy, Delius, Gadamer, Heidegger, Holloway, Lyotard, Nancy, Rosen, Roth, and Stravinsky.

Performances 1

Thursday 12 November, 20:00 – 22:00 · Concert Hall

Uliana Bychenkova — *The Dark Continent of Noise. A Feminist Politics of Excess*

Lemmo — *Sound Parasite*

Michel Kessler — *Acherontic Waves*

Vittoria Quartataro — *upon winged boxes*

The Dark Continent of Noise. A Feminist Politics of Excess

Uliana Bychenkova

What Freud famously called the "dark continent" of femininity designated a region where symbolic knowledge encounters its own limits. Within psychoanalytic discourse, feminine desire often appears as opacity, negativity, lack, or unknowability. This presentation proposes another reading. Rather than absence, the dark continent may be understood as a condition of excess: a dense territory where affect, sensation, memory, and desire exceed available forms of *repr*esentation.

Drawing on feminist psychoanalysis, Michel Serres' understanding of noise as a necessary condition of communication, and Marie Thompson's work on noise and affect, I approach noise not as disturbance or informational failure, but as excessive signal: a multiplicity of relations unfolding simultaneously. Noise becomes significant not because it destroys meaning, but because it reveals the limits of forms that seek to contain complexity.

Within this framework, listening emerges as a central methodological and political practice. Listening is not interpretation, but inhabitation. Rather than resolving affect into explanation, listening creates conditions in which complexity may remain present without being prematurely reduced to symbolic clarity. Noise offers a particularly fertile environment for such listening because it foregrounds density, simultaneity, nuance, and relational multiplicity.

The presentation proposes a feminist politics of excess grounded in practices of listening. Revisiting the psychoanalytic figure of the dark continent, it asks how excess may be approached without being pathologised, domesticated, or transformed into lack. Instead of treating symbolic articulation as containment, the project understands symbolisation as a process of giving space: a way of allowing affective intensities to acquire form without exhausting their movement.

The presentation combines theoretical reflection with a research-framed lecture-performance involving fixed-media sound, vocal traces, projected textual and graphic materials, and live presentation.

Rather than approaching listening as a mode of interpretation, the project proposes listening as a practice of inhabitation: a way of remaining with affective complexity without prematurely reducing it to symbolic clarity.



Bio

Uliana Bychenkova is an interdisciplinary artist, designer, composer, performer, and feminist artistic researcher working between sound, voice, textuality, and intermedia. Her current research revisits Freud's "dark continent" through feminist theory, psychoanalysis, and sound studies, approaching noise not as disturbance but as a condition of excess, simultaneity, and affective complexity. Through electroacoustic composition, noise performance, experimental radio, graphic practice, and artistic research, she investigates listening as a practice of inhabiting what exceeds symbolic clarity. She is currently a research associate at the Gustav Mahler Private University of Music in Klagenfurt.

Sound Parasite

Lemmo

This research-framed performance-presentation concerns the "sound parasite": a value situated between my own sound practices and Michel Serres' philosophy. For many years, I have composed music for dance, theatre, and poetry. My encounter with Serres' concept of the parasite has led me to articulate a connection between his approach and my compositional work.

For Serres, the parasite is a way to read economic, interpersonal, and cultural dynamics; the background noise of relations, a constant deviation, and a transformative potential — a thermal exciter that tilts systems and triggers change; a fluctuating action that shifts relational states and redistributes energy.

This perspective situates my sonic practice within a field of interferences and arguments. I call "sound parasite" this intersectional zone between sound and philosophy, a mode of listening located among sounds, between sound and gesture, and between gesture and listening. Drawing on Serres' parasite, it acts as a minimal deviation that introduces multiplicity in sonic perspectives.

The sound parasite operates across several planes: micro-variation within non-linear systems generating sonic material; rhythms and beating patterns from simple objects; minimal gestures that, through duration, reveal emerging structures. In this sense, it brings philosophical processes into musical research, not to move attention away from sound, but rather to expand the imaginaries shaping it. It nourishes composition and listening through a transdisciplinary lens, while keeping the focus on sound itself and the material, relational forces shaping musical practice. At the same time, it also becomes a tool for accessibility: a bridge that allows listeners to enter sonic complexity through philosophical instruments that nonetheless return attention to sound. It reshapes my ways of positioning myself as a composer, a trans person, and a listener.

My presentation will consist of a live performance of musical materials developed from these principles, followed by a theoretical exposition of my research.

Bio

Lemmo is a composer and sound researcher working in electronic and experimental music. They are currently pursuing a PhD in "Sound and Music Computing and Cultural Heritage" at the Conservatorio G. Verdi in Turin, with a project centered on the "Sound Parasite". Their practice spans sound research and multidisciplinary contexts, interweaving musical and sonic inquiry with social and theoretical concerns. They have ongoing collaborations with artists including Chiara Bersani, Margherita Morgantin, Mariangela Gualtieri and Cesare Ronconi (Teatro Valdoca), Lucia Palladino, and DOM.

Acherontic waves

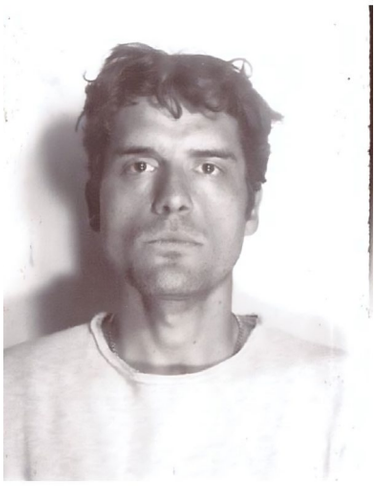
Michel Kessler

This research-framed performance presentation begins with Orpheus as an archaic figure for a contemporary condition: listening before the world has stabilized into language. In Michel Serres' work, music opens a zone where matter, signal, body, technique and cosmos remain entangled. I approach this zone through Cyberanimism, a framework I have developed across architecture, sound research and artificial intelligence to describe resonant relations between technical systems, spatial environments and more-than-human agencies.

The presentation stages listening as a rite of orientation inside computational and planetary turbulence. Its materials are waves, glitches, grains, spectra, feedback loops, field recordings and synthetic voices; its conceptual operators are the instrument, the parasite, the signal, the membrane and the world-machine. Through SuperCollider and live digital signal processes, including granular synthesis, spectral transformation and Fourier-based analysis, I will construct a short sonic environment in which the instrument appears as a matrix between code, body, material and space.

Rather than treating sound as an illustration of philosophical concepts, the presentation uses sound as a speculative method. What does it mean to think with vibration before thought becomes visual, categorical or declarative? What kind of knowledge appears when the world is approached as a field of resonances, interruptions and returns? Serres' writing suggests an epistemology in which music is older than discourse and more precise than metaphor: a mode of contact with the real as it trembles, interferes and transmits.

The performance proposes the Orphic listener as a figure for contemporary artistic research: neither master of the signal nor passive receiver, but an operator moving through unstable thresholds between myth, mathematics, architecture, computation and noise.



Bio

Michel Kessler is an architect, sound researcher and filmmaker based in Zürich. He studied architecture at ETH Zürich, where his work engaged with computation, artificial intelligence, spatial media and experimental forms of representation. In 2020 he founded ORPHNOISE, a platform exploring sonic architectural textures through algorithmic composition, field recordings, sound walks, deep listening sessions and workshops. His sonic practice is shaped by the architectural and mathematical imagination of Iannis Xenakis, as well as by spectral thinking, granular synthesis and the spatial dimensions of sound. In 2012 he participated in the International Summer Courses for New Music in Darmstadt as a composer, where Wolfgang Rihm and Jorge Sánchez-Chiong became important mentors; he also attended courses with Hildegard Westerkamp. Recent projects and fieldwork have taken him to Colombia, Japan and New York. Across artistic, architectural and theoretical projects, he investigates resonant relations between space, technology, ecology, perception, artificial intelligence and non-human agencies.

upon winged boxes

Vittoria Quartararo

In a context of unprecedented ecolog*ical turbulence, how do reality and artistic practice change when we* explore modes of intellectual and sensory expansion at the piano?

'What I seek to shape, to compose, to promote is a synthesis, not a system – a shifting confluence of currents' (Serres, 1992). Taking this quote from Michel Serres' conversation with Bruno Latour as a starting point and in response to the actual 'crisis of modes of connection' (Lassus, 2010), I propose a hybrid form of recital at the intersection of performance art and experimental music theatre, embodying the multiplicity of artistic and natural ecosystems. The metaphor of the 'box' brings together the stage — itself a container of multiple layers — the piano, the electroacoustic setup, together with an old phonograph, a birdhouse and a book, addressing a reflection on listening. For any of those box declinations are both nests and safe havens; familiar spaces, but also their opposites: ambiguous shells whose potential contents remain unknown, and which could alter any future anticipations. Building on Serres' definition of music as the universal language of living beings (Serres, 2011), I will trace a counterpoint between the philosopher's words, recordings of natural habitats and my staged interpretation of the concepts of immersion and comprovisation: alongside the new piece for piano and electronics by Daniel Alvarado Bonilla Rain, Dust & Rust (2025), I will perform three Debussy Preludes (La danse de Puck, Feuilles mortes, Les fées sont des exquisites danseuses) and improvise on some of the earliest birdsong recordings ever made, as found in the sound books of Ludwig Koch (1881–1974). This combination of musical pieces, soundscapes and poetic and scientific discourse can offer a musical translation of the 'web of relationships' that Serres seeks in his philosophical synthesis, where every fleeting moment is a form of secret resistance.



© Mario Giordano

Bio

Vittoria Quartararo studied at the Scuola di Musica in Fiesole, under Valentina Pagni and Andrea Lucchesini and obtained a Master's degree in Musicology from the University of Florence. She specialized in contemporary music at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz in Cologne, Germany under Jacob Leuschner, Claudio Martínez-Mehner and David Smeyers. As a multidisciplinary artist, she is often drawn to staged concert formats that explore the hybrid realm of performance art and since 2022 she works in the ensemble project I Transiti, presenting a form of minimalist musical theatre often inspired by the 'poetic-illogical' aesthetic of collage. Following a residency programme (Kintai Arts, 2024), birdlife sparked her interest in transdiplinarity and artistic research. As a new PhD student at Collège GLAREAN, she explores the connections between environmental sciences and experimental performance through an approach that can be summed up as follows: playing! — at the piano, in the world, with others.

Paper session 3

Friday 13 November, 09:00 – 11:00 · Concert Hall

Chair: Bruno Forment

Danilo Mandic — *Resonant ordering: noise, music, law*

Gemma Jolliffe — *Interpreting wind-sound and mobilising turbulence through Serres' Genesis*

Jonathan Impett — *"La Musique n'est pas un savoir, mais un puits d'où sortent toutes les inventions possibles"*

Zeynep Toraman — *The Interrupted Feast: Parasitic Form and the Practice of Listening*

Resonant ordering: noise, music, law

Danilo Mandic

There is a long tradition of associating the idea(l) of well-balanced order with harmonious music. The notion of music is not only a metaphor of law, but it is both a description and source of normative formations. In dominant Western frameworks, music is positioned against noise which carries the quality of interference or disturbance to an established order. Music thus becomes an 'organised sound' which makes audible the formation of social, linguistic, cultural and authoritative structures.

Michel Serres's oeuvre fundamentally resists such dualisms and introduces passages that cross boundaries, disciplines or systems of knowledge. For Serres, what appears as disorder is the very condition of possibility for communication, relation, and formation; noise is not the negation of order but its generative background. Within this framework, music is neither the opposite of noise nor its resolution, but a quality that is at once integral to and distinct from it—a soft, global, omnipresent modulation that 'passes from noise to language without touching either,' a 'perpetual and immanent instability' that fluctuates between nature and culture.

Adopting Serres's resonant mode of thought, this paper explores the extent to which music can be understood as a quasi object that shapes subjects, objects, and collectives through its inherent movement. Tracing the implications of Serres's work on the senses – particularly his conception of hearing as an act of transformation, transmission, and material exchange – the paper argues that music operates as a dynamic mediator of information and sensations. In doing so, it repositions music not as a model of order/composition but as a processual force that informs the emergence of social, perceptual, and epistemic configurations.

Bios

Dr Danilo Mandic is Senior Lecturer in Law at the University of Westminster. His research is focused on investigating new conceptual and methodological frameworks to critically think about copyright law. His work is situated within the intersections of law and humanities, with a particular interest in the processes of knowledge formation. Danilo's research interests include intellectual property law, art law, law and sound, law and technology, aesthetics of law, and popular culture. Danilo is also a co-editor of the Law and the Senses series published by University of Westminster Press (2018-23).

Interpreting wind-sound and mobilising turbulence through Serres' Genesis

Gemma Jolliffe

Problematising the epistemological sanitisation of wind(-sound) and departing from normative conceptualisations of chaos and excess, this contribution diverges to elaborate what might happen in and through the development of the windscape as mode of methodological rupture. This intervention unsettles the relationship(s) between wind and (recorded) noise by extending beyond the oft singular trajectories which foreclose, erase, and (already) make 'neat'. Resisting these impulses and rather advocating for a rich and generative messiness, this particular contribution elaborates an experimental means of scéalaíocht, story-telling, by subverting the normative use of the wind-shield as provocation to apprehend the environment in its fullness and intensity. Attending to this noise, through a close reading of Serres' Genesis, forms part of my broader project articulating the more-than-textualities of both wind and the winded body as dual subject-objects. Excavating these entanglements through shifting habitus-apparatus relationships, this work seeks to make space for multiple ways of knowing and being in weather-worlds. Grounded explicitly in sound recorded within Éireannach (Irish) landscapes, this contribution (re)represents otherwise those multiple and mutable more-than-human agencies at work. How else to attune to those strange (sound) encounters overflowing land, air and sea?

Bio

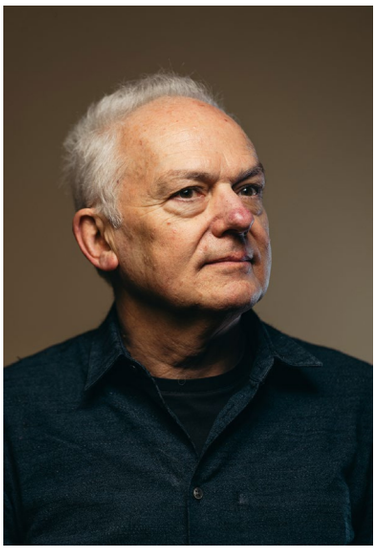
Gemma Róisín Jolliffe is a doctoral candidate at the University of Cambridge and recipient of the Vice-Chancellor's Award. Gemma is a cultural geographer and sound artist with particular interests in landscape, folklore, spectrality and the elemental. Working with and from long-term research encounters on the West Irish coast, Gemma co-convenes the University's Geographies of Knowledge research group and works within the Vital Geographies cluster to attend to the more-than-human agencies of their research subjects. Gemma's work is concerned with listening to the wind as a mode of attunement, re-encountering the spaces haunted by the bean sídh (banshee).

“La Musique n’est pas un savoir, mais un puits d’où sortent toutes les inventions possibles”

Jonathan Impett

Serres makes reference to music throughout his work; indeed he frequently mentions his desire to compose. Such mentions of music shift scale and perspective constantly: from metaphorical to material, from mythical to contemporary. Their contexts and frameworks shift widely: information, technology, language, theatre, history. And the very subject transforms in the process of discussion: music, sound, noise, rhythm, waves, biology, geology.

How might a musician understand the material implications of Serres’ views on music - both wide-ranging and extraordinarily consistent? In this paper I suggest that such an apparently telescopic-microscopic-kaleidoscopic vision accurately reflects the state of music-sound art practice and discourse as they have developed through the first part of this century. Motivated by the constant undercurrent of his urge to compose, Serres’ insights have material implications for how music of the present and future might function and be understood to function. They raise equally vital questions.



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Bio

Jonathan Impett is a composer, trumpet player and writer. His work is concerned with the discourses and practices of contemporary musical creativity, particularly the nature of the technologically-situated musical artefact. His early development of the ‘metatrumpet’ constituted one of the first projects to explore instrument, performer, interaction technologies and composer as a single creative space, necessitating new conceptual models. As a performer he is active as an improviser, as a soloist and in historical performance. His recent monograph on the music of Luigi Nono is the first comprehensive study of the composer’s work. Jonathan is currently working on a project considering the nature of the contemporary musical object and the technicity of music. Activity in the space between composition and improvisation has led to continuous research in the areas of interactive systems, interfaces and modes of collaborative performance. Recent works combine installation, live electronics and computational models with notated and improvised performance, using fluid dynamics as a unifying behavioural model based on wave phenomena. The new project Anamnesis takes a radical approach to AI, using transformer models to suggest creative paths implied but unnoticed. Jonathan is also a longstanding member of The Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century and The Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra. He is currently a senior researcher at Orpheus Instituut, Ghent, where he leads the research group “Music, Thought and Technology”.

The Interrupted Feast: Parasitic Form and the Practice of Listening

Zeynep Toraman

What is the difference between speaking about music and experiencing it? In *The Five Senses*, Michel Serres sets the speaking tongue against the tasting one; this paper asks what that means for musical thought. It argues that form is not the property of a self-contained object governed by internal coherence, but arises through the encounter of heterogeneous elements, and that interruption is one of the operations through which that encounter becomes perceptible.

Starting from Serres's parasite, at once uninvited guest and static, the paper reads two interrupted meals as sound rather than plot. At Mokroye, in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov,* voices, languages, and refrains build an unstable polyphony until the feast goes silent before the law arrives and recodes the web that sustained it. In Clarice Lispector's *The Passion According to G.H.*, the web turns inward: the meal is interrupted from within, by a withheld scream and a lapse, and speech opens an interval, a note between two notes.

Catherine Lamb's *Prisma Interius VII & VIII*, the first written for Johnny Chang and the latter for ensemble, moves the web outward and makes the interval audible. Their Secondary Rainbow Synthesizer (developed with Bryan Eubanks) filters environmental sound through the harmonics of a just-intonation mode, while a harder stroke on a tempered key reaches the note between notes. Where equal temperament shares out the remainder of tuning, the score writes it down and leaves unwritten the beats and difference tones that arise between pitches, in the room and ear. With Serres's noise and Deleuze's remainder, tuning's commas become form's condition, not its exception. Interruption and interference, the paper proposes, are distinct operations that meet in this interval, and together locate musical form in relations beyond the composed material.

Rather than establishing correspondences among literature, philosophy, and composition, it thinks through their mixture. Listening becomes a way of encountering form as ongoing negotiation, not settled unity, in which interruption and interference take part.



Bio

Zeynep Toraman is a Berlin-based composer-performer working with voice, instruments, electronics, text, and memory. Her music moves between contemporary composition, electroacoustic song, and intimate sonic storytelling, often drawing from autobiography, literature, film, and archival materials.

She has collaborated with Contrechamps, Ensemble Proton, Ensemble Musikfabrik, Quatuor Diotima, Distractfold, and Wet Ink Ensemble, among others, with performances at Festival Archipel, Sonic Matter, and IRCAM ManiFeste. Her research has been supported by the DAAD.

She has released music with Another Timbre, Obscure & Terrible, Sawyer Editions, Superpang, and Speckled Toshe, and works closely with filmmaker Burak Çevik, scoring Forms of Forgetting (2023) and The Weary Hours of Two Lab Assistants (2026).

Zeynep completed her PhD in Composition at Harvard University in 2023, studying with Chaya Czernowin, Hans Tutschku, and John Hamilton, and has taught at IEM Graz.

Paper session 4

Friday 13 November, 14:00–15:30 · Concert hall

Chair: Magno Caliman

Paulo De Assis — *Footnote 27: Deleuze, Guattari, Serres, and the Epistemology of the Anexact*

Lucas Braga — *Looking inside the furnace: noise, music, myth, and the "acoustic turn"*

Hans Kretz — *Rendering a Shared World Audible: Music-making, Mediation, and Collectivity*

Footnote 27: Deleuze, Guattari, Serres, and the Epistemology of the Anexact

Paulo De Assis

'Proposition III' from Deleuze and Guattari's 'Treatise on Nomadology' (1980) discusses different modes of knowledge production, arguing for a special kind of science (eccentric, minor, nomadic, anexact) directly derived from Michel Serres' 'The Birth of Physics' (1977). In this book, Serres contends that Lucretius's poem De rerum natura contains a physics that Western science ignored for centuries. Instead of the dominant 'martian' tradition based on deterministic laws and solid mechanics, Lucretius presented a 'Venusian' physics centered on fluids, turbulence, and randomness. In this model, order is turbulence: stable forms are temporary vortices in dynamic flows, generative forces precede formal structures, stable being is replaced by continuous processes of becoming. Within a plural image of rationality, measurement is only one regime of knowledge. Flow, variation, topology, and transformation can be equally rigorous, leading to an epistemology that does not begin with control, but with relations and passages.

In the 'Treatise on Nomadology' (Plateau 12 of A Thousand Plateaus), Deleuze and Guattari present an opposition between 'royal science' and 'nomad science'. Royal science is the dominant mode of knowledge production: metric, quantitative, centred on form, measure, law, and axioms. Nomad science is problematic, topological, vectorial, concerned with flows, materials, noise, and transformations. Michel Serres gives them philosophical and historical legitimacy for claiming that there exists a science that is rigorous without being metric. Reading Archimedes and Lucretius, Serres' bold claim is that modern physics did not invent rationality; it selected one of several rationalities and erased the others.

Claiming that this 'minor', 'nomadic', 'anexact' yet rigorous science is highly adequate for artistic research, this presentation will discuss Deleuze and Guattari's use of Serres' ideas, the context of their quotes, and include a practical experience of building an 'anexact' object. A brief extension to Gaston Bachelard's epistemology of the approximative will open up to future investigations..



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Bio

Paulo de Assis is an artist-researcher in music with expertise in piano, experimental performance practices, composition, and music philosophy. He is a Senior Research Fellow at Orpheus Instituut (Ghent), where he leads a research group on experimental creative practices at the intersection of performance, composition, music and contemporary philosophy. He is the Principla Investigator of the ERC Advanced Grant 'Posthuman Music: Creative Practices after AI and Blockchain' (2026-2030). Between 2013-2018 he was the Principal Investigator of the ERC Starting Grant MusicExperiment21. He was the founder and chair of the transdisciplinary conference cycle Deleuze and Artistic Research (DARE). In addition to his artistic practice, Paulo de Assis has published extensively, including the monograph Logic of Experimentation (2018), several articles on novel concepts, such as "hypermusic", "music 2.0", and "posthuman music", the co-edited volume Decentralized Music: Exploring Blockchain for Artistic Research (2024), and multiple edited volumes on assemblage theory for artistic research.

Looking inside the furnace: noise, music, myth, and the "acoustic turn"

Lucas Braga

My objective is to investigate how noise and music seem to provide an ontological horizon in Michel Serres' framework; how literature and myth (following both Serres and François-Bernard Mâche's work) take part in it, and compare it to the ideas of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro.

Pascal Quignard observed that "the ear has no eyelids", but Michel Serres would disagree. "the cloud of small perceptions, external and internal, should make us feel uneasy and dizzy, (...) yet we see almost nothing of this intense chaos, which nevertheless exists (...)". Everything is signal and noise. Disorder more ordinary than order. It's the parasite. "All things in the world exchange information and store it." His way of thinking relations – very similar to Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's ontological turn – does not "distinguish me ontologically from a crystal, a plant, an animal and the order of the world: we drift together towards the background noise of the universe". Human language would be the final link in this cosmic chain, and music operates as something like an ur-language. Preceding everything, "the senseless sounds of music give birth to languages; sciences are born from its codings".

Once Serres said that he would like to see our "furnace-like interior, so hidden, that blindly moves us". Noise, music, ontology, epistemology, the unconscious, stories, myths – everything melds together in this oven inside us. The universe is ontological layers, atoms, bodies, consciousnesses, each exchanging and made of information. If "noise is the Real before all structure", is the noise of my nervous system an "unconscious" (Musique)?

Serres draws attention to the limits of the cogito and the subject/object binary: a violent epistemology that subjects the masses to "a guillotine controlled by an elite". His "Ptolemaic revolution" opens way to a framework founded on sound rather than vision — with profound consequences for ecological thought, psychology, politics and music making..



@floramateoro

Bio

Lucas Braga is a Brazilian writer and musician. Braga holds a degree in Philosophy from the Universidade de São Paulo and an MFA in Creative Writing from Instituto Vera Cruz. His musical background spans conservatory training in classical guitar to jazz big bands and contemporary/experimental music. During his last years he studied and played with André Marques, from Hermeto Pascoal & Grupo. His practice weaves philosophy, speculative literature, sonic fiction, and songwriting. Braga is an assistant editor at the cultural platform and magazine Revista Rosa, an independent publication fostering critical intervention within contemporary philosophy, politics, and contemporary art. He also co-creates the podcast Boletim de Ocorrências Especulativas alongside experimental composer Cadu Tenório. Developed in partnership with Brazilian publishing house GLAC edições, the project turns contemporary political theory and philosophy into sonic-textual assemblages and speculative fiction. He is currently finishing his debut novel and album.

Rendering a Shared World Audible: Music-making, Mediation, and Collectivity

Hans Kretz

In this presentation based on Michel Serres' work adjacent to music-making and mediation, I will present a philosophy of creativity that departs from the vocabulary of mimesis, representation, and figuration. Serres appears as a thinker of invention and futurity, for whom thought is not modeled on vision but unfolds according to a musical logic, through variation, relation, and emergence. Contemporary networked musical practices offer a particularly revealing horizon for this problem, as sites where the composition of a shared world becomes experimentally perceptible in real time, and where the conditions of democratic emergence can be enacted. The possibility of a shared world rests upon the emergence of a common experiential ground: a field of perception, attention, and sensation through which individuals can adhere to a reality perceived as meaningful and rewarding. From Aristotle's account of the polis to Schiller's aesthetic education and Kant's sensus communis, philosophy has repeatedly sought to articulate the conditions of such shared experience. Across his reflections touching on music-making and mediation — on communication, noise, the senses, and technological mediation — Michel Serres returns to the processes through which relations are composed and worlds are shared. These reflections open onto an ontology of relation/"having" grounded in sense experience (aesthetics). Serres' philosophy acquires renewed significance in a historical moment marked by profound transformations in the technological organization of perception: if contemporary media increasingly shape the conditions under which individuals encounter one another, then mediation becomes inseparable from the conditions under which collective forms of life emerge and become perceptible to themselves. This presentation puts Serres in dialogue with Albrecht Wellmer's account of aesthetic intersubjectivity, which examines how shared experience can arise in opposition to discursive consensus. I will also engage with Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt's reflections on experience and counter-publicity (Gegen-Öffentlichkeit), confronting them with Serres in order to clarify his notion of mediation as a process through which shared worlds are composed at the level of experience itself. These lines of thought are brought into practice through a project bringing together online networked performance and universal design in the service of creating accessible performance opportunities.

Bio

Hans Kretz is a conductor, pianist, researcher in philosophy and educator. He holds a PhD in Music (Practice Led) from the University of Leeds and a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis. He integrates his roles as an improviser, conductor, and creative artist with technological experimentation, informed by his experience collaborating with the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA) in network performance and AI-driven co-creativity. His musical endeavors are part of an ongoing practice-based research that seeks to reassess the intersections of social arts, social sciences, and engineering sciences through the lens of judgment and artistic anthropology, through participation in projects such as the EU Horizon project Multisensory, User-centred, Shared cultural Experiences through Interactive Technologies. His writings have appeared in the Recherches d'Esthétique Transculturelle series by L'Harmattan and in the Cahiers Critiques de Philosophie. His PhD in philosophy, Esthétique transculturelle et philosophies du jugement, was recently published by L'Harmattan. Recent conferences include CeReNeM (University of Huddersfield), the Symposium on Computer Music Multidisciplinary Research (CMMR) in Tokyo, the IRCAM Forum, and Orpheus Instituut.

Performances 2

Friday 13 November, 17:30 - 19:30 · Concert hall

Juan Parra Cancino — *Reconstructing the Parasite: Jaap Vink, Feedback Performance, and Michel Serres' Philosophy of Noise*

Burak Korkmaz Schwichow — *The Third Audible and Orpheus in the Hum*

Sharon Phelan — Citizens United: A Speech Act

Richard Craig — *Michel Serres and the ur-musician*

Reconstructing the Parasite: Jaap Vink, Feedback Performance, and Michel Serres' Philosophy of Noise

Juan Parra Cancino

This lecture-recital investigates how reconstructing and performing early electronic feedback systems can engage Michel Serres' philosophy of noise and parasitism. Focusing on Dutch composer and sonologist Jaap Vink (1930–2023), and contextualised through Harald Bode's instrument designs and Éliane Radigue's listening practices, it argues that analogue electronic music offers a material model of Serres' parasite.

In *The Parasite*, Serres proposes noise not as an obstacle to communication but as its condition of possibility. The parasite interrupts transmission, introduces asymmetry, and generates new relations: without interference, communication merely reproduces itself; disturbance forces systems to adapt, evolve, and produce information.

Vink's feedback-based studio practices—tape delays, ring modulation, filters, and recursive signal paths—operate through this parasitic logic. Rather than seeking stability, they cultivate productive interference: small perturbations generate unexpected resonances and emergent behaviours beyond compositional intention. The performer enters a dynamic relation with the system rather than regulating it from outside.

Through "interpretation as time-machine," reconstruction activates unfinished technical milieus. Drawing on prior experimental performances of Radigue and Bode, the project treats historical electronic music as an active field of relations between archives, technologies, performers, and audiences. Live performances using reconstructed feedback configurations derived from Vink's techniques act as deliberate parasitic insertions, reactivating their capacity to generate new musical forms.

Bio

Juan Parra Cancino studied Composition at the Catholic University of Chile and Sonology at the Royal Conservatoire The Hague, obtaining an MA focused on electronic-music composition and performance. He received his PhD from Leiden University in 2014 with *Multiple Paths: Towards a Performance Practice in Computer Music*.



As a guitarist, he participated in Robert Fripp's Guitar Craft and ensembles including the Berlin and Buenos Aires Guitar Ensembles and, until 2003, The League of Crafty Guitarists. His live electronics work has received grants from NFPK, the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, and the International Music Council.

Founder of The Electronic Hammer and Wiregriot, he collaborates regularly with Ensemble KLANG and Hermes. Since 2009, he has been a researcher at Orpheus Instituut, Ghent, focused on computer-music performance practice. He is Regional Director for Europe of the International Computer Music Association.

The Third Audible and Orpheus in the Hum

Burak Korkmaz Schwichow

Michel Serres distinguishes three kinds of audible — the body's own murmur, the noise of the world, and the din of the collective, the last so dominant it "cancels out" the other two. He describes the body as a "black box full of black boxes," a stack of rectifiers resolving hubbub into information or silence; health, for Serres, is maintained silence, and illness is the moment the hum becomes audible.

This lecture-recital reads anthropogenic low-frequency saturation as Serres' third audible: the industrial hum — air conditioning, refrigeration, solar inverters — that masks both the body's first audible (amplified organ and cell signals) and the world's second (the Schumann resonance, geophony). The recital stages this masking, then performs an Orphic reversal, peeling the saturation back to recover what it conceals. Drawing on The Listening Body, a community-tested protocol built around an open-source ELF/VLF device, I argue that Serres' rectifier reframes the contested "body as resonator," pairing his nested boxes with stochastic resonance.

Method follows argument. Amplified, audified recordings present each audible as presence; parameter-mapped data sonification appears deliberately as its dysfunctional foil — sound's spectrogram, the distancing image whose inadequacy is heard. The contrast runs on a secondary Serresian leitmotif, Hermes against Panoptes: immersive, ubiquitous listening — after Voegelin's phenomenology — set against the visual-extractive eye. Where Serres equates audibility with illness, the protocol deliberately induces it, turning invisible slow violence into felt, forensic pathology.

Read with Yuk Hui, the signal/noise cut becomes not a transmission problem but a cosmotechnical condition: whose rectifier decides what counts as signal. Spatial audification, the live signal chain, and the project's noise/signal cartography serve as working apparatus.



Bio

Burak Korkmaz Schwichow is a Berlin-based multimedia artist, designer, and researcher working across data sonification, acoustic ecology, and aural epistemologies, currently pursuing EU-funded doctoral research. His practice treats sonification as the intensification of relation rather than the representation of data, foregrounding constitutive opacity and the apparatus problem. Recent work includes Balearización (Best Social Science Sonification) and Sondeo Nodular (deep-sea mining; UN Ocean Conference, Lyon 2025), alongside the collaborative research project The Listening Body. He works multilingually in German, Spanish, and English, with sustained engagement in nineteenth-century acoustics, media theory, and cosmotechnics. (Verify award/affiliation wording.)

Citizens United: A Speech Act

Sharon Phelan

Abstract: "I am the resonance and the tone." Sharon Phelan will explore the physical threshold of noise and vibrational language through her sound essay 'Citizens United: A Speech Act'— how noise (plenum) is a space packed with all potential messages simultaneously—how words revert back into physical phenomena as sound particles instead of linguistic tools, collapsing under the sheer weight of their own frequencies—how repetition creates a tactile topology of perception, of mingled bodies, following Michel Serres assertion that noise is the first object of metaphysics, the background of all being, the primordial sea from which all order, language, and systems are born.



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Bio

Sharon Phelan is a Dublin-based artist and educator whose work spans performance, installation, writing and composition. With specific attention to sound, voice, resonance and poetics of place, her practise engages with ways of listening, field recording and language, often through site-responsive and collaborative projects. She is particularly interested in ways of knowing sound and listening from a marginal perspective, guided by filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-ha's concept of 'listening to intervals'.

Recent exhibitions and performances include: Brown Mountain Diamond; Osaka World Expo; Fête de la Musique; Metronome; The School of Wild Listening; The Dock; EVA International; Reception; Audiograft; Limerick City Gallery; and VISUAL. Her writing has been presented in publications with Solstice Arts Centre; The Sonic Arts Research Unit; NCAD Creative Futures Academy; and Theatrum Mundi. She is a 2026 recipient of the Sonic Arts Residency at University of Limerick Electronic Music Studio.

Michel Serres and the ur-musician

Richard Craig

"Acoustic and musical, your body, will be able, thanks to your initiation, to free itself from dependence on these languages, common or learned, whose meaning and sounds render most your kind deaf to all the noises of the world. Talkative, inexhaustible, authoritarian, exclusive, autistic, languages and I, their memory, deafen use to every other sound"

Musique – Michel Serres

Composition, be it scored, improvised, using acoustic instruments, with computers or digital media, is a practice that is embedded in Western culture through distinct pedagogical models and a canonical mindset. These systems of thought prioritise pre-existing forms, techniques and hierarchical structures that accentuate efficacy and the streamlining of production. But what about the imaginative task of composition and the tension of the imaginary versus its substantiation in the world? Where might the composer turn to free themselves from 'languages common or learned?' How can apprentice composers engage more fully in the imaginative exercise of composition, and in a way which engages philosophically with the organisation of sound, the space it inhabits and its wider role in post-human thought ?

Through this presentation and performance I will establish a personification of Serres' ur-musician in my approach to composing and playing, situating his thinking as a source of my concept and performance practices. This presentation will also situate my practice as a musician (performer/composer), by highlighting my own compositions and discussing how the work of Michel Serres, with reference to his text Musique, has initiated a sensitisation of my practice as a category which moves beyond the designated role of performer.



Bio

Richard Craig (flute) was born in Glasgow. He studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Conservatoire de Strasbourg. He performs with groups such as Musikfabrik, Klangforum Wien, ELISION and in Scandinavia with CAPUT, Kammarensemblen. He has released two solo discs of contemporary works, Vale and Inward, and recorded for Another Timbre, Wergo, FHR, Métier, as well as SWR, BBC and Finnish Radio. Not only a celebrated advocate of contemporary music, his recent album of the Telemann Fantasias and his improvisations was lauded as "bold, beautiful and clever" (Gramophone). He is also an improviser, composer and teacher, currently Lecturer and Director of Performance at the University of Edinburgh.

Paper session 5

Saturday 14 November, 09:00–10:00 · Concert Hall

Chair: Jonathan Impett

Violaine Boutet de Monvel — *The Visual Parasite: Noise, Recursion, and Creative Emergence from Video Synthesis to Generative AI*

Michael Castelle — *Bottou Implements Serres: Originary Noise in the the Training Processes of 21st-Century AI*

The Visual Parasite: Noise, Recursion, and Creative Emergence from Video Synthesis to Generative AI

Violaine Boutet de Monvel

In The Parasite, Michel Serres described noise not as an obstacle to communication but as its condition of possibility, a force of disruption and invention from which signals emerge. Building on this insight, this paper examines artmaking as a recursive process of noise magnification that produces difference within repetition, situating creative emergence at the edge of chaos and collapse. Two extreme aesthetic and epistemological cases anchor this argument: optical feedback in video synthesis and model collapse in generative AI.

In optical feedback, a camera pointed at its own monitor synthesizes reflexive patterns in which noise functions as both input and effect, the former driving the system toward stochastic variation and increasing formal complexity in the latter, potentially leading to chaos. In model collapse, recursive training on a model's own outputs gradually erases coherence, resulting in word repetition, pixel noise, and formal simplification until the system ultimately breaks down through self-referential iteration.

Both situations invite artists to engage with noise much as one might play an instrument: not by imposing complete control but by steering fluctuations within a recursive process. Chaos transforms and complexifies a given configuration through the influx of noise, while collapse emerges when a system is deprived of such input and ultimately exhausts itself in silence. In artistic terms, what is partially disrupted to be reinvented is a prior state of homeostasis—whether a canon, a motif, a form, or a style.

Drawing on media archaeology, cybernetics, information theory, and Serres's philosophy of noise, this paper argues that such extreme conditions illuminate how creative emergence occurs through the destabilization of established forms, from the audiovisual avant-gardes to generative AI. By privileging instability over control, this recursive perspective reframes noise not as the failure of aesthetic systems, but as a condition through which difference effectively arises from repetition.



Bio

Violaine Boutet de Monvel is a postdoctoral researcher and scientific assistant in the Machine Visual Culture group at the Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History. She previously taught in the Film & Media Studies Department at Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, where she earned her PhD in 2025 with a dissertation titled From Video Feedback to Generative AI: On Recursivity in the Arts and Media. She has developed a definition of art as noise magnification, reframing the engineering bias of information theory.

Bottou Implements Serres: Originary Noise in the the Training Processes of 21st-Century AI

Michael Castelle

The mid-1970s were a key moment in the career of Michel Serres. Where in the 1960s he once appreciated the algebraic abstractions of the Bourbaki group and read Leibniz as a mathematical structuralist avant la lettre, he now began to renounce the projection of all phenomena to algebraic sets and operations, which threatened to reduce everything (including language) to a kind of static formalism. This can be intuitively understood in Serres' work on the intellectual relevance of both the science (Carnot) and art (Turner) of thermodynamic engineering — a fundamental but underappreciated stochastic revolution underpinning the more famous revolution referred to as "industrial". For Serres, "language is not alone in the world... there are topologies, spatial manifolds, energies, and power". Meanwhile, in Serres' reading of Lucretius in his Birth of Physics (published in the same year), the Epicurean clinamen represents an unpredictable swerving of atoms, "the smallest imaginable condition for the original formation of turbulence".

I will here argue that the training process of contemporary "deep" artificial neural networks (conventionally known as "AI") — whether its input data be millions of symbols of written language or on millions of samples of musical waveforms — unintentionally realizes aspects of Serres' "generalized structuralism", materially implementing both the classification and generation of textual, visual, and/or sonic patternment in an explicitly aleatory manner. It is in the unfolding dynamics of these systems and their ability to "generalize" (and not "overfit") where the constitutive and seemingly requisite role of noise (i.e. the "stochastic" in "stochastic gradient descent") still appears to present itself to machine learning theorists as a mystery and controversy — albeit one which might have been less mysterious or controversial to Serres himself. I will illustrate this claim with reference to contemporary music-generation AI models as well as to Serres' beloved "Pithoprakta" by Xenakis.



Bio

Michael Castelle is Associate Professor at the University of Warwick's Centre for Interdisciplinary Methodologies. His research involves applying sociological, anthropological, historical, and semiotic perspectives to recontextualize and understand contemporary technological practices, from databases and distributed systems to machine learning and artificial intelligence. He has co-edited the volume The Cultural Life of Machine Learning: An Incursion into Critical AI Studies (2021) and was co-investigator on the "Shaping 21st Century AI: Controversy and Closure in Research, Policy and Media" international research project. He recently co-authored the paper "AI as Super-Controversy" (2024) with Noortje Marres and other scholars in the journal Big Data & Society and "Language Machines: Toward a Linguistic Anthropology of Large Language Models" (2026) in Journal of Linguistic Anthropology.

Performances 3

Saturday 14 November, 10:00–11:00 · Concert Hall

Boryeon Choi — *Sonic Metamerism and the Voices Between Species*

Kevin Toksöz Fairbairn — *Paraphone*

Sonic Metamerism and the Voices Between Species

Boryeon Choi

For Serres, the parasite does not exchange but changes the currency, inventing along a diagonal that transposes the unit of account. This lecture-recital carries that operation into the practice of sound. In colour science, metamers are stimuli whose spectra differ yet match perceptually under a given illuminant, so that identity lies not in the physical signal but in the conditions of perceiving it. I extend this into what I call sonic metamerism, the listening conditions under which two physically different sounds are heard as one source, and I argue that such hearing is itself a change of currency. An exchange model fixes a rate between spectrum and identity, and spectral morphing obeys it, averaging two sounds arithmetically, so that any new creature it yields remains merely accidental. Metameric listening, by contrast, changes the unit, since sameness is transposed from spectral content toward energy and structure, toward the conditions under which a source holds constant.

Working through physical modelling, I therefore treat the morphologically incommensurable bird syrinx and mammalian larynx as commensurable in the currency of energy flow, mapping exciter to glottal pulse and tract-formant to tract-length. Between them, countless impossible vocal beings can be generated, found not by design but by heuristic fumbling, where the most interesting sounds arise in the fumbling itself, and noise becomes the source of the signal. Drawing on Scream Study and Old Man's Joke, in which a songbird's song and a scream prove to lie along a single spectrum, the talk sounds these transitions live. To hear two sounds as one source is finally an abductive wager, an Orphic listening for a constant in the noise, and so a form of knowledge that is made rather than exchanged.



Bio

Choi Boryeon (b. 1993) is an artist and researcher based in Seoul who works at the intersection of auditory perception and epistemology through physical-modelling synthesis, sound installation, and critical publishing. She develops the framework she calls sonic metamerism, together with a wider sonic epistemology, in order to ask how sound conditions and sometimes blocks the formation of belief, and how a listener comes to hear two physically different sounds as a single source. Her recent works model the vocal organs of birds and mammals to trace the thresholds where one voice turns into another, as in Scream Study (2025) and Old Man's Joke (2025). This research appears both as lecture-performances, such as Parenthesised (2025) and Cake-cutting algorithm (2024), and as books, including Processed Live (2025) and K-OS (2020). She holds an M.F.A. in Media Art from Yonsei University and a B.A. in Painting from Hongik University.

Paraphone

Kevin Toksöz Fairbairn

In Genesis, when describing "The Object of this Book," Serres concludes by stating that "[t]he multiple had been thought, perhaps, but it hadn't been sounded." Embarking from this aspiration, this presentation diffracts Serres' notions of multiplicity through disciplines less textual than his own — namely craft, materiality, and performance — and thereby seeks to generate voices and bodies that give material and corporeal extension to Serres' speculation.

As he plays off the word parasite's double meanings (in French) of host, guest, and also white noise, Serres reimagines these superposed connotations as endless cycles of declamation, interruption, and ventriloquy. Within this network, Serres asks us to consider interruption as a form of listening — an interference that is always already the ground for some other interference or superposition. To give voice is already to interrupt; to interrupt is to resonate; and to resonate is to respond to the inevitable diffraction of other voices in the world.

The paraphone examines how the oscillation and fluctuation of these endless interruptions form their own acoustic wave, a meta-sonority whose resonance prompts us to pivot and reorient, navigating the interscalar spectra of interwoven materials and bodies embroiled in this sea of feedback. Through its construction, traditions of lutherie (specifically brass instrument making and organ production) are subsumed into this parasitic background static before reemerging as hybrid technologies. The paraphone embodies superposition and interference: its body houses multiple sources of sound production scattered throughout its array of tubes and bells, which then congeal and distort as their competing fundamentals and harmonics converge internally before bursting out in every direction.



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Bio

Kevin Toksöz Fairbairn is a performer, sound artist, and scholar working around the edges of installation, improvisation, composition, and craft. He has been building traditional, experimental, and invented instruments for decades and currently presents performance installations throughout Europe and North America with hybrid acoustic instruments of his own invention and construction.

His most recent book on material voices and collective creativity, Hylo Narrans: Echoes of Material Marronage, was published by Open Book Publishers in 2025, and his previous monograph on craft, sound, and material agency, dis/cord: Thinking Sound through Agential Realism, was published in 2022 by Punctum Books.

He is a founding member of hoodwink (with Winnie Huang), Blechtrommel (with João Carlos Pacheco), and les Trombones de Bâle, and performs regularly at preeminent new music festivals. Since 2023, he is a researcher and docent at Leiden University.

Credits

Symposium convened by Jonathan Impett and Zeynep Toraman, research cluster “Music, Thought and Technology”, Orpheus Instituut, Ghent.

Technical team: Chonglian Yu and Juan Parra Cancino.

Symposium coordination: Elisabeth Salverda

This event is organised by
Jonathan Impett and Zeynep Toraman
at Orpheus Instituut.
Our research centre is a place where musical artists can conduct individual and collaborative research on issues involved in artistic practice.



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