electro//acoustic

concert 1 | voices
1–2pm

concert 2 | horizons
2.30–3.30pm
in dialogue with George Benjamin
4.00–4.45pm

concert 3 | homages
5–6pm

concert 4 | chambers
7.30–8.30pm

don common ground | breathing
sound-visual installation
West Road Concert Hall Foyer
Opening at 12.30pm

14th March 2024
West Road Concert Hall,
Cambridge, CB3 9DP

Design and photography by M. Andersen / Andersen M Studio ©2024. www.andersenm.com
Humanity is facing a new transition in the relationship between humans and machines, between breath and mechanics, between the disorderly chaos of life and the discerning serene order of technology. Rapidly advancing developments in artificial intelligence thrust humans into a world driven by seemingly unstoppable progress. Paired with this, however, is fear of the fragility of humanity when faced with what the mind perceives as a methodical and implacable advance by machine intelligence, in a humanly uncontrolled manner. Human creativity counters the rupturing duality of human/machine, turning it into a site of encounter and collaboration. Electroacoustic music entangles technology and creativity with the sensitivity to the creases of beingness and brings the listener to a state of breathing in and with machines, in a sort of pulsating intracorporeal transmission. Early etymologies of breath intertwine soul and respiration, intersecting human breathing with an aspect of inspirational corporeality. Media theorist Berardi tells us that “chaos stands for an environment that is too complex to be decoded by our available explanatory frames, an environment which fluxes too quickly for our minds to elaborate (2018: 39).” Historically, in the desire for order, music has been one of the ontological structures that as Saussure said of language, creates “a system that only knows its own order” (1916: 45).

The electro/acoustic day creates breathing spaces of voiced, instrumental and electronic sound throughout the hours of a full day, in a similar manner to liturgical hours threading sonic environments of breath and beingness.

Vanessa Paloma Elbaz

This event is taking place as part of the Cambridge Festival
Jonathan Harvey, Mortuos plango vives voco (1980)
electroacoustic composition
Commissioned by IRCAM; Publisher, Faber
Sound Projection, Marta Gentilucci

Errollyn Wallen, Pace
(The Choir of St Catharine’s College)

Song of Songs (Shir HaShirim leShelomo)
excerpts from the Cantillation from Tangier

Marc’Antonio Ingegneri, Salve Regina a 4
Marc’Antonio Ingegneri, Virgo prudentissima
Gareth Wilson, Mulier (from Seven Last Words)
(The Choir of Girton College)

Tefilat HaGeshem, Prayer for Rain/ Sephardi Liturgy
melody from Tangier.

Christopher Fox, All might, all majesty
William Byrd, Sanctus from Mass for Four Voices
Christopher Fox, Our joy and grief compounded
William Byrd, Agnus Dei from Mass for Four Voices
Christopher Fox, His sweetness

Ein Keloheinu, There is no other than G-d
Hebrew, Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Spanish - melody from Fez

Sam Thackray, Be present, O merciful Lord
Annie Chown, I will be with you
Alice Rivers, I will extend my peace
Serghi Latnow, Dostoino Yest
Alexander Gretchaninov, Bogoroditsye Dyevo

Anton Bruckner, Ave Maria

Vanessa Paloma Elbaz, voice
The Choir of St Catharine’s College
The Choir of Girton College

**concert 1 | voices**

1–2pm

*Mortuos Plango, Vivos Voco* (I Lament the Dead, I Call the Living) launches the voices concert by inviting the listener to immerse into a vocal-resonance soundscape through this electroacoustic piece for eight-track tape. Created in 1980 as a commission by the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, Harvey's contrast of the sound of the tenor bell from Winchester Cathedral and the voice of his son Dominic, a chorister at Winchester, reminds the listener of mortality and the eternity of vibrational prayer with a text from the bell's inscription: Horas Avolantes Numero, Mortuos Plango: Vivos ad Preces Voco (I count the fleeting hours, I lament the dead; the living, I call to prayer).

The vocal concert proceeds to launch a series of sung prayers, as if following the exhortation of the electroacoustic piece to the living – a call to prayer. Threading breaths, bodies and voices placed throughout the concert hall in monophonic and polyphonic interpolation, a dynamic playing through space, breath and bodies in relationship to acoustics, architecture and resonance unfolds.

The concert is bookended with two pieces evoking peace and serenity with harmonic and timbral throughlines: Errollyn Wallen's *Pace* sung by the St. Catherine’s College Choir and Anton Bruckner’s *Ave Maria* by both Girton & St. Catherine’ College Choirs, hints at a semiotic connection between peace and the divine feminine. Bruckner’s ode to the Virgin Mary at the end of the concert connects to Girton Choir’s earlier section offering the listeners a proposal that the feminine is the key to peace with the inclusion of *Salve Regina* and *Virgo prudentissima* by Ingegneri and Wilson’s *Mulier*.

Within the general framing between peace and the feminine, there are three punctuations from Moroccan Jewish liturgy, the first evoking the connection between voluptuousness and mystical connection from *Song of Songs*. Secondly, the traditional prayer for rain, a supplication for fertility and sustenance at the end of the High Holiday yearly cycle. The third, a multilingual prayer from the ancient Slat el Fassiyin synagogue in Fez declaring God’s unity. The traditional cantillation of *Song of Songs* surprises, as it is based on syncopated rhythms with pauses and breaths meant for unisons in congregation, as if a demonstration of unity of communally transmitted knowledge embedded in the text.

The two final choral sections frame breathing voices around peace and understanding through the alternations between compositions by William Byrd and Christopher Fox and the final section ends poignantly with Alexander Gretchaninov’s, *Bogoroditsye Dyevo*, centering the Virgin Mary, and the sacred feminine as bestower of peace.
This fully electroacoustic concert entitled horizons features four pieces by UK composers. horizons interjects in the electro/acoustic day with a proposition brought forth by art historian Laurie Palmer (2023) about moving out of the world of hierarchies and hard borders into the world of horizons, where separations between dualities are blurred. Using the non-hierarchical symbiotic structure of lichen as model, the desire is to create dynamic multidirectional sites of creativity. This concert allows the electroacoustic to demonstrate the versatility of its aesthetic contribution as it moves through vibration, dream, aurality.

_Dreaming Waves_ is inspired by the work ‘Inventions for Radio: ‘The Dreams’ by Delia Derbyshire and Barry Bermange, in particular the movements ‘Falling’ and ‘Sea.’ This piece explores the cyclic motion and sensations of dreaming with small pockets of memories and abstract sounds surfacing, creating an enveloping sound world of electronically generated material, archival material (from DD110) and source recordings.

_A Bit Closer to Home_ explores the idea of souded romances and aural memories that connect people to a specific time and place in their lives. Changing soundscapes reveal a lot about the history of a place and its changes, such as sounds that may have changed due to industrial engineering and economic development. Moreover, the memory of these sounds adds another layer of information according to what sounds people remember from their past.

_Avartan_ explores how noise and sound-induced music should be felt as vibration, rather than heard with the cochlear. Low frequencies, harsh recurrences, repetitions and cyclical motifs exist in entanglements within this studio work. The piece is a call to arms to address the lack of diversity and representation within the broader fields of the arts, academic, experimental, electronic music, and sound circles, in terms of both aural and cultural diversity with Black and South Asian artists. _Avartan_ poignantly allows for varying volume and different modes of listening with a nod to hearing differences, whether it be through vibrating floors, dub sound systems, loudspeakers or headphones.

_Through an Ocean of Storms_ was originally composed as a soundtrack for a short film celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 12 mission, this 5.1 surround sound composition is made entirely from audio recordings of the NASA Apollo 12 mission and extended trumpet (performed by Dr. Bede Williams, St Andrew’s University). The work is loosely structured around the narrative of the mission using live radio communications as dialogue, with which the music provides an affective and evocative sonic score exploring the extension of human potential via technology, seeking to evoke the wonder, awe and challenge of human endeavour and exploration.
homages reiterates human relationships to sociality through artistic and intellectual lineages, and sonic and sounded breath which reappear in creative work inspired by others’ vision and trajectory.

Hans Tutschku says that the idea for Klaviersammelung developed over several years. “Each time I visited the University of Cologne, I was impressed by the long hallway between the musicology department and the concert hall, which houses an impressive collection of desolate pianos from different centuries, charged with musical remembrances. One walks with respect, almost on tiptoes along them, to not disturb their dreams of a better past. Many times, I thought about how their sounds could become the source material for a new composition. In July 2011, I finally spent some hours and elicited quite ‘un-pianistic’ sonic expressions from some of the instruments. A large spectrum of those played sequences, together with their transformations, became the starting point for an outrageous sound travel into the sonic world of piano.”

The dialogue with the music of the past is one of the fundamental factors for fully understanding the music of George Benjamin, one of the most important composers of our time. Fantasy no. 7 for consort of violas by Henry Purcell, presented in this program in a piano transcription, is particularly important for Benjamin, as the intersection of lines and harmonies of this work changed his journey as a composer.

Olicantus from 2001 was composed as a gift for the 50th birthday of Benjamin’s friend Oliver Knussen, demonstrating attention to polyphony. Knussen was affectionately called Olly by his friends; hence Olly-cantus - song for Olly.

Meditation on Haydn’s Name (1982) exploits the typical procedure of letter/note association; H-a-y-d-n thus becomes B-A-D-D-Sol, a motif that acts as a drone held by the tonal pedal above which luminous melodic and chordal lines stand out, derived through inversions and transpositions from Haydn’s name.

The dialogue with the music of the past is one of the fundamental factors for fully understanding the music of George Benjamin, one of the most important composers of our time. Fantasy no. 7 for consort of violas by Henry Purcell, presented in this program in a piano transcription, is particularly important for Benjamin, as the intersection of lines and harmonies of this work changed his journey as a composer.

The same technique is adopted in Menuet sur le nom d’Haydn by Maurice Ravel, a composer particularly loved by Benjamin, composed to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Haydn’s death in 1909.

Richard Causton explains his piece Masks (2023):

“These five short pieces for piano form the start of a larger project using the Electromagnetically Prepared Piano which is currently under development at IRCAM (Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique) in Paris. In the final, completed work, four new electroacoustic pieces will be interspersed amongst the five current movements. The use of electromagnets greatly expands the capabilities of the instrument. But the more I experimented with them, the more I found that to create musical meaning, I needed to restrict the way I used the piano in the five purely acoustic movements.

So here, the pianist’s ten fingers play only ten pitches - five black notes and five white - right at the centre of the keyboard.

The music focusses as much on how the keys are lifted as how they are depressed. At these moments it points towards a melody of subtraction, where the sudden emergence of notes that had been masked creates a ‘phantom’ musical line, rather like the negative of a photographic image. Because, traditionally, our ears have been attuned to the attacks of notes, becoming sensitive to a melody resulting from their subtraction entails a slightly different way of listening.

Whilst working on the piece, I had in mind a series of subtitles for each. They are respectively Toccata, October 2023, Anthem, Turning... and Aria. Masks is dedicated to Erik Bertsch.”
As humans breathe, think, create, sing, we interact with spaces and elements of the built world. Instruments, one of the earliest technologies developed by humanity, in use for at least 60,000 years, began with humans breathing into hollowed out bones with holes, starting the long sonic interaction between human and animal, aesthetics, belief and the infinite. Implements for making music have developed technologically with humanity’s rhythms and cycles of deep time. The concert of “chambers” highlights how external architectural spatiality which is ubiquitously present in musicking also engages intimately in relationship with the chambers of the heart, and the pulsing that vibrations create through the hollow spaces of the body.

Annie Mahtani describes her piece and its relationship to the climate disaster.

“Breathe is part of a series of works composed using recordings made at the Birmingham Institute of Forest Research. The experiment addresses the key challenge of the impact of climate and environmental damage on woodlands through the simulation of the atmosphere we are predicted to have in 2050. Breathe explores the man-made and industrial elements of the forest: pipes wield their way around the experiment transporting CO2 and generators are housed across the facility to power the experiment. The soundscape is the antithesis of a typical forest. In contrast, the piece also uses recordings of the internal activity of trees, from sap moving through the tree to the habitats that they provide for insects and wildlife. The piece comments on feelings of eco-anxiety and eco-guilt that many people have found themselves carrying as the climate emergency escalates.”

The second part of the chambers concert explores the varieties of manners that Western composers and performers have explored in relation to the technological possibilities of instruments, using breath, material and sonority to create aesthetic structures and evoke emotion. The spatial disposition of the performers in this concert aims to awaken the audience to listen again to familiar repertoire in a manner that surprises, much like Britten’s re-listening of Dowland.

The permutations between instruments, pieces and timbres performed in a manner that evokes the musician as central to the moment, and the composer as one link in a chain of a line of transmission of sound, thought, breath demonstrates the light whimsy with which the seriousness of play must be approached, and the way sound pieces through generations – breathing – on common ground.
This immersive installation is a unique collaboration between visual artists from the Cambridge School of Visual & Performing Arts (CSVPA) and composition students from the Faculty of Music, University of Cambridge. Staged in the foyer of West Road Concert Hall, the installation invites you to experience and explore intricate intersections emerging between the auditory and visual elements.

Drawing inspiration from the writings of Italian philosopher, theorist and activist, Franco ‘Bifo’ Berardi, the project focuses on the symbolic significance of breath/breathing in our contemporary age. The title is suggestive of a shared space, within which expressions converge, emphasizing the unity of creative forces in addressing challenges faced by society and culture today.

The visual artists initially created silent moving image works, in response to a brief. Subsequently, the musicians devised the soundtracks in response to the visual provocations; the resulting collaborations were then brought together into a shared space and time.

Through the dynamic interplay of sound and image, the installation invites you to contemplate the fragility of breath while celebrating the human capacity for adaptation. The act of breathing becomes a metaphor for navigating an external chaos; respiration as means of regulatory equilibrium.

The experience encourages contemplation of the power of unity over division. The combined creativity emphasizes the potency of artistic ingenuity and the profound potentiality – in terms of well-being, even resistance - of poetic expression. Together, visual and musical artistry combine to form complexities that speak to shared human understanding, urging us to recognize the strength to be found in collaboration and the potential for awareness and transformation through artistic dialogue.

As you navigate the West Road Concert Hall foyer, you’ll encounter four screen/speaker combinations, dispersed strategically throughout the space. Each of these set-ups offers a unique perspective. There is no ‘correct’ way of experiencing the installation; the choice is yours, whether to hone-in on the details of a particular sound/image pairing in turn, or to let the sounds influence your path. We invite you to exercise your agency, making your own personal connections with the themes of adaptation and resilience – strategies for coping – woven into the fabric of this collaborative endeavour.

Come breathe with us – let us conspire together – on this common ground.

With thanks to Dr. Marta Gentiacci for sharing her original vision for this project, and for extending the invitation to participate in electro/acoustic day 2024.

Edward Dimiduk, Professor of Art & Contemporary Visual Culture
at the Cambridge School of Visual & Performing Arts (CSVPA).
Richard Andersen is an internationally-renowned artist, designer, and photographer. His film and video artworks have been shown in over 20 majorbiennale, and both his design and photography have been exhibited and published worldwide. Andersen was born in Stockholm, Sweden in 1947 and attended the Royal College of Art, London where he studied graphic design. He has worked extensively in the field of visual communication, and his work has been exhibited at major museums and galleries around the world. Andersen's work is characterized by its playful and humorous approach to design, often incorporating elements of popular culture, humor, and irony. His projects range from large-scale installations to smaller, more ephemeral works, and he has collaborated with a diverse range of artists and designers. Andersen is currently based in London, where he maintains his studio and continues to produce new work.
**Brona Martin**

Dr. Brona Martin is an Electroacoustic composer and sound artist from Banagher, Co. Offaly, Ireland. Her compositions explore narrative in Electroacoustic music, acoustic ecology, oral history, sound and heritage and audio spatialisation techniques. Brona is a Lecturer in Music and Sound at the University of Greenwich where she teaches on the MA in Music and Sound Design course on the module `Audiovisual Composition for Film, Games and Media`.

She is also a researcher within the SOUND/IMAGE Research group where she is involved in research activities such as: exploring spatial audio applications and workflows in electroacoustic music and VR and gaming technologies; project lead on The Record Shop and Black Music Project which explores the role of the record store as a community and social hub. Oral histories, film and audio and photographic memories will be compiled to create an educational resource, a publication, website and podcast series; sound and image Research Centre Knowledge Exchange Lead.

**Laura Mondello**

As a concert guitarist, Laura Mondello has performed in Italy, Spain, Germany, the UK, Switzerland and Brazil. Among her recordings are two solo albums published by the label StabatMater. Her critically acclaimed CD ‘Le Guitestre di un Organista’ (2013) is entirely dedicated to César Franck’s organ and harpsichord music in Laura’s own guitar transcriptions. The recent CD Laura Tabia (2022) presents a variety of twentieth-century music, including pieces that were expressly composed for her.

Since 2003 she has been working with guitarist Stefano Grondona at the retrieval and diffusion of the repertoire of the historic guitar duo Miguel Llobet (1878-1930) and Maria Luisa Ardisio (1907-1996). Grondona and Mondello’s CDs: Homenaje and Hommage were highly praised by critics internationally, who likened the duo to its celebrated historic precursors. These CDs are part of a collection of all the works by Llobet in seven discs, brought to completion in 2012.

Her interest in the relationship between musical gesture and dance led her to realise the Nocturnal Dance Project with the choreographer-dancers Emanuela Mondello and Luca Russo. This work is based on Benjamin Britten’s ‘Nocturnal’ after John Dowland, op. 70. For many years, Laura has been studying and playing historical instruments by the greatest guitar-makers from the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth – figures such as Antonio de Torres, Manuel Ramírez, Santos Hernández, Enrique Garcia, Francisco Simplício, Domingo Esteban and Vicente Arias. Laura is Professor of guitar at the Monteverdi Conservatoire in Bozen (Bozen), and holds courses and masterclasses in a variety of other musical institutions.

**Amit Dinash Patel, aka Dashume**

Amit Dinash Patel is an experimental noise and sound artist, influenced by Asian underground music and DJ culture. His work focuses on performing and experimenting with purpose built do-it-yourself instruments, and recording these instruments incorporating looping, re-mixing and re-editing techniques. Lack and loss of control are central to his work. He has a PhD in Music, ‘Studio Benzi: the DIY nomad and Noise Selector’ (2018), from the University of Exeter.

St Catharine’s Choir

St Catharine’s College lies at the historic centre of Cambridge and at the heart of the University’s distinguished musical tradition. Founded in 1473, there has been a choir associated with the college for over a hundred years; and since 1999, a full-time professional choir has been resident as part of the college community. Performing regularly at college chapel services, events and concerts across Europe and the USA, the college choir has a strong reputation and wide audience.

The college choir is drawn mainly from the college’s undergraduate cohort and its main function is to maintain the weekly round of services in the college’s 19th century chapel; but its work extends beyond, to broadcasts, recordings and concert tours. In recent years the choir has toured to the Far East and the United States and China, and makes frequent visits to the continent. The choir has released several discs on the Ronsos Classics label, championing the best in contemporary British choral music as well as little-known Renaissance reprints.

**SOUND/IMAGE Research Centre**

The SOUND/IMAGE Research Centre investigates the disruptive potential of sound and new media technologies to counter established ocularcentric perceptual biases. We bring together an interdisciplinary team of musicians and sound designers, film makers, scientists, architects, artists and philosophers to critically reflect upon the relationships between the auditory and the visual, in ways that deliver insight to effect real world change. Using practice as a tool of critical enquiry, we are engaged in a wide range of international projects with high-profile collaborative partners.

**Hana Tutschkova**

Hana Tutschkova is a composer of instrumental and electroacoustic music. In 1982 he joined the “Ensemble für intuitive Musik” and in 1988 he studied theatre and composition in Berlin, Dresden, The Hague, Paris, and Birmingham. He collaborated in film, theatre and dance productions, and participated in concert cycles with Karoline Stockhausen. Since 2004 he directs the electroacoustic studies at Hamburg University.

Improvising with electronics has been a core activity over the past 35 years. He is the winner of several international competitions, among others: Hanno Eister Preis, Bourges, CIMESP-Sao Paulo, Pia Auron Erotica, Piao Nortol, Pia Musica Nova, ZKM Giga-Hertz, CIM/ICEM and Kläng!. In 2005 he received the culture prize of the city of Wuertatbesides his regular courses at the university, he has taught international workshops for musicians and non-musicians on aspects of art appropriation, learning, creativity, composition, improvisation, live-electronics, and sound spatialization in more than 20 countries.

**Bettina Varwig**

Bettina Varwig is Professor of Music History at the University of Cambridge and Fellow of Emmanuel College. Following her PhD in 2008 from Harvard University, she held a Fellowship at Magdalene College, Oxford (2005-8) and a British Academy/Postdoctoral Fellowship at Cambridge (2008-9). She taught at King’s College London from 2003-2017, as a Lecturer and then Senior Lecturer in Music, her research interests span early modern and musical performance, as well as the history of the body, the emotions and the senses. She has also worked on the reception of J. S. Bach’s music in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, in particular with performances of his Passions. She is the editor of the volumes ‘Rethinking Bach’ (Oxford, 2020) and author of two monographs: ‘Histories of Heinrich Schütz (Cambridge, 2011)’ and ‘Music in the Flesh: An Early Modern Musical Physiology’ (Chicago, 2013). Her work received the Jerome Roche Prize of the Royal Musical Association in 2013 and the William H. Scheide Prize of the American Bach Society in 2016.

**Edward Wickham**

Edward Wickham was appointed Director of College Music at St Catharine’s in 2003. As well as his duties in Cambridge, he maintains an active career as a conductor, choral coach and academic. With his Gramophone award-winning vocal consort The Clerks, he recorded over 20 CDs, and performed in many of the country’s most prestigious concert halls. His work with choirs has taken him to the United States, the Far East and festivals throughout Europe, and he is founder and artistic director of The Oxford and Cambridge Singing School, which delivers music courses for children in the UK, Far East and Australia.

**Gareth Wilson**

Gareth Wilson is Director of Chapel Music and Bye-Fellow at Girton College, Cambridge University, an Affiliated Lecturer in the Music Faculty, lecturing in Counterpoint and Fugue, and is an academic professor assistant at Royal College of Music. He examines for the Royal College of Organists and, in addition to freelance work as a choral conductor – which includes a guest conductorships with the Beverley Family Consort, the Chapel Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, and The Renaissance Singers in London - is Director of Music at Christ Church, chelesea, where he conducts the professional choir and has directed the first performances of over 200 new works across the Anglican liturgy as well as playing a leading role in securing a major restoration of the church’s Flentrop organ. He is in demand as a workshop leader and is an active composer whose music has been performed by the BBC Singers, the Choir of St John’s, Cambridge, the Choir of Merton College, Oxford, and by the Choir of the Chapel Royal at the baptism of Prince Louis, in addition to having been heard in dozens of cathedrals, churches, and College chapels all over Britain, and in Canada and the USA, as well as on BBC Radio 3 and Radio 6, Classic FM and on several recordings. He holds a doctorate in Theology and in 2017 was elected Associate of the Royal Academy of Music (ARAM) in recognition of his significant contribution to the music profession.

**Outreach Program**

Stephanie Clayton

Darren Bloom

Delphina Mondey

James Olsen

**Technical Assistance**

Myles Eastmond

Gil Karpas

Antoine Perrotti