

CCM

FACULTY ARTIST SERIES
PRESENTS

“SPARKLING STREAMS
MARA HELMUTH,
COMPOSITION AND
ELECTRONIC MUSIC

Patti Cudd*, vibraphone

Shiau-uen Ding**, piano

Esther Lamneck, tárogató

Andrea Vos-Rochefort***, clarinet

**Tuesday, September 1, 2026
Cohen Family Studio Theater
7:30 p.m.**

PROGRAM

(Sparkling)

Mara Helmuth

Water Birds

Mara Helmuth and Andrea Vos-Rochefort
Andrea Vos-Rochefort, clarinet

Burren Wind

Mara Helmuth and Esther Lamneck
Esther Lamneck, tárogató and real-time composition
Alfonso Belfiore, video

Night Shimmer

Patti Cudd, vibraphone

Mara Helmuth

Messages From a Hot, Rotating Star****

Mara Helmuth

All Alarms Sounding

Mara Helmuth
Shiau-uen Ding, piano

Wind Blown Rain

Mara Helmuth
Esther Lamneck, tárogató and real-time composition
Alfonso Belfiore, video

Sparkling Streams****

Patti Cudd, vibraphone
Esther Lamneck, tárogató
Andrea Vos-Rochefort, clarinet

Mara Helmuth

* *University of Wisconsin, River Falls*

** *CCM DMA, piano*

*** *Texas A&M University-Kingsville, CCM DMA, clarinet*

**** *World Premiere*

PROGRAM NOTES

Water Birds (2010, 2018): s a structured improvisation for clarinet and computer. The piece was originally composed by Mara Helmuth and clarinetist Rebecca Danard with an interactive wireless network sensor system. The most recent version is created with clarinetist Andrea Vos-Rochefort, who added bird movements to the piece and created her own score: <https://www.clarinetaillmusic.com/products/helmuth-vos-rochefort-water-birds-clarinet-fixed-audio>

Burren Wind (2023):

The Burren is on the Wild Atlantic Way on the coast of Ireland, where one experiences the “ancientness” of limestone landscapes, the winds off the ocean, and intricate rock shapes with colorful bursts of lichens and flowers. These all inspired the lines, sounds and textures of Burren Wind, with audio and video created from tárogató multiphonics, granular synthesis algorithms and images of the Burren. Esther Lamneck and Mara Helmuth created the piece after visiting the Burren, following the International Computer Music Conference at the University of Limerick in 2022. Alfonso Belfiore created an interactive or fixed video component based on his images of the Burren. The work exists in stereo, 8-channel or 7th order Ambisonics (64-channel) versions.

Night Shimmer (2025):

In the forest the faraway fairy music tinkles, calling you
you may pass the sounds of leprechauns tapping tiny boots
if you find the shimmery clearing with sparkling lights,
dancing and magic music
you might not return for a long, long time...

Night Shimmer was inspired by reading a Leprechaun story about a girl who was so drawn in to dancing to fairy music, that she disappeared for 20 years. The idea of a magical music that could draw a child away from her family and into a dancing circle for decades, seems parallel to the experience of composing computer music, which can turn one’s focus from daily life to vibrant sound worlds for an extended period of time. The piece is a predecessor for a Guggenheim project beginning in 2026, which is concerned with creating tools for composing music for both instruments and computer. The piece was written for percussionist Patti Cudd.

Messages From a Hot, Rotating Star (2026): is an interactive piece based on some of the sonification techniques in the fixed media From Orion to Cassiopeia. Parameters of 3359 pulsars, mostly within the Milky Way Galaxy, were mapped to granular synthesis techniques, to let the pulsars sing. I relied on data from the Australia National Telescope Facility Pulsar Catalogue data. The pulsar parameters can hint at the stories of these dense neutron stars which emit different types of electromagnetic radiation, and can be young and spinning rapidly, or old and slow, or have orbits with one or more companion stars. The two modes in this interactive project are inharmonic, where grain frequencies are related to pulsar rotation speeds and just intonation, where the pulsar locations are mapped to a 2,3,5,7 lattice, with just-tuned 3rds, 5ths and 7ths. Audio is generated within MaxMSP with rtcmix~, and the video comes from a Unity virtual environment, based on the same data as the audio.

PROGRAM NOTES

All Alarms Sounding (2016, rev. 2026): was originally written for Shiau-uen Ding and Kris Rucinski, for 2 pianos and 8-channel electronics. Shiau-uen performs a new version for 1 pianist and 8-channel electronics here. Some of Rucinski's improvisation is woven into the electronic part.

Alarms go off every year, every month, about the consequences of climate change. In 2016, 22% of Australia's Great Barrier Reef died because the ocean temperature was too warm, because of the continuing rise in carbon emissions from human activities. The difference between ideal conditions and deadly conditions for coral is 2 degrees Celsius, or 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit.

The Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest organism, spanning 132,964 square miles. I spent several days snorkeling in the outer and inner reefs in the summer of 2016 near Port Douglas and Shute Harbor, Queensland. The fascinating variety and beauty of these living parts of the reef will stay with me. But the biggest bleaching event on record happened in 2016, and there have been 4 catastrophic mass bleaching events since then, in 2017, 2020, 2024 and 2026. The largest annual decline in 39 years of monitoring was seen in 2025-2026, with back-to-back extreme summers. The southern region lost nearly a third of its high coral cover.

It is naive arrogance to think humans can evade the consequences of degrading the environment, which is changing conditions faster than we and other species can evolve. Complex systems like Australia's reef, the rainforest and the mangroves evolved over millenia to coexist, the wildlife in an intricate balance with their environment. Fast changes are not something that can be accommodated easily by evolution. Something may survive climate change on earth, but it may not be us, or life as we know it.

Wind Blown Rain (2025): was inspired by natural processes and forces involving water. Water metamorphoses between many opposing states: from a gentle drizzle to a stormy downpour, from a tiny droplet to a crashing ocean. Life on earth is dependent on water, and also at its mercy. This piece focuses mainly on the transformed sounds of rain and tárogató interactions. Source samples were recorded in Venice and Ascea, Italy. The music was composed in the summer of 2025 at Wassard Elea Artist's residency in Ascea, Italy by Mara Helmuth and Esther Lamneck. While most of our previous collaborations have relied solely on the sound of the performer's instrument for the computer part, in this piece the instrumentalist interacts primarily with music created from natural recordings and their processed transformations. Alfonso Belfiore created the video part in response to the music from his own water-related video recordings. The video component is a visual meditation on the natural landscape, filtered through the inner rhythm of rainfall. Created with images generated and modified using artificial intelligence, the editing alternates slow-motion sequences, crossfades, and subtle variations to evoke a dilated sense of time. The environment, immersed in rain, transforms gradually, suggesting a fragile balance between presence and dissolution. The visual work accompanies the music as a mental landscape—fluid and contemplative.

Sparkling Streams (2026): is a structured improvisation designed for Patti Cudd, Esther Lamneck and Andrea Vos-Rochefort and electronics, based on sounds from the pieces performed in this recital.

BIOGRAPHY

Alfonso Belfiore is a composer and visual artist whose work explores the relationships between sound, image, movement, and perception. Former professor of electronic music at the Conservatories of Florence and Padua, he has collaborated with international institutions, creating performances, sound installations, and multidisciplinary projects that merge musical innovation with digital art. His recent work investigates memory, dreamlike space, and the fragile line between reality and imagination.

Patti Cudd is an acclaimed percussion soloist, chamber musician, recording artist, and educator recognized for her leadership in contemporary and experimental music. A committed advocate for new work, she has premiered more than 200 compositions and performed throughout North America, Europe, and Asia, including appearances at the Bang on a Can Festival (New York), Frau Musica Nova (Cologne), and festivals in Korea and Thailand.

Cudd is a longtime member of the new-music ensemble Zeitgeist and has collaborated with a wide range of artists and ensembles, including Minnesota Contemporary Ensemble, Sirius Ensemble, Minnesota Dance Theatre, and Borrowed Bones Dance Theater. She has worked closely with many of today's most influential composers, among them John Zorn, Morton Feldman, Brian Ferneyhough, Julia Wolfe, John Luther Adams, and Pauline Oliveros.

Her discography spans major contemporary-music labels such as Neuma, Innova, New World Records, Bridge, HatHut, CRI, EMF Media, and Mode Records, featuring both solo and chamber recordings as well as works integrating percussion with electronics.

Cudd holds a DMA in Contemporary Musical Studies from the University of California, San Diego; an MM from SUNY Buffalo; and a BS from the University of Wisconsin–River Falls. She also studied in the soloists class at the Royal Danish Conservatory of Music as a Fulbright Scholar. She is a Distinguished Lecturer at the University of Wisconsin–River Falls, where she received the university's highest teaching honor, the 2021 Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award.

Patti Cudd brings a spirit of curiosity and innovation to all aspects of her work, continually expanding the expressive possibilities of percussion and inspiring audiences and students alike.

Shiau-uen Ding grew up in Taiwan. She then went to Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music for a master's and a doctorate, and moved to New York City. She is fortunate to have studied with Ying Wang, Lina Yeh, Eugene Pridonoff (piano), Mara Helmuth (computer music), and Alan Bern (contemporary improvisation), and to work with numerous wonderful composers. Shiau-uen has performed in France, Germany, Belgium, China, India, South Korea, and throughout the US and Taiwan. She premiered Christopher Bailey's Empty Theatre, a quasi-concerto for piano and orchestra, at SinusTon Festival in Germany, and gave the American premiere of Philippe Manoury's Das Wohlprāparierte Klavier with Miller Puckette. She was called a "daredevil" by The New York Times for her performance at Bang on a Can Marathon, and has recorded for Capstone, Centaur, Innova, and New Focus. Shiau-uen enjoys performing old-school classical and contemporary music equally. When she is not making music or listening to music, she might be writing code for financial trading systems. Visit <https://www.shiauuending.com> for more information.

BIOGRAPHY

Mara Helmuth has been enthusiastically involved with electronic and computer music composition and research for decades. She is a 2025 Guggenheim Fellow, and she received the George Rieveschl Award for Scholarly and/or Creative Work at the University of Cincinnati in 2023. Recent works include *From Orion to Cassiopeia*, a sonification of pulsar data, *Opening Spaces*, a video based on a virtual reality environment, *Onsen: Hot Springs*, for vibraphone and fixed media and the collaborations *Wind Blown Rain*, *Burren Wind* and *Sound Dunes*. She is currently Professor of Composition at College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati and director of its Center for Computer Music. Her music has been performed internationally at conferences, festivals and arts spaces, and is on recordings from PARMA, INNOVA, Fundamental Sounds, Centaur (CDCM), Open Space, Electronic Music Foundation and Everglade. She has collaborated extensively with performers including composer/clarinetist/tarogato virtuoso Esther Lamneck, vibraphonist Joseph Van Hassel, clarinetist Andrea Vos-Rochefort, and saxophonist/composer Rick VanMatre. Her research has involved wireless sensor networks and music, Internet2 improvisation and performance, and the RTcmix music programming language. She created two installations for the Sino-Nordic Arts Space in Beijing, one for the Teach and Tour Sojourners organization in Kampala, Uganda, and the Five Worlds virtual reality installation in collaboration with CCM students. She curated the Sound and Video Anthology 2019 in the Computer Music Journal Issue 43:4 from MIT Press, with a downloadable three-concert collection of works by women composers. Her writings also include analyses of works by Annea Lockwood, Carla Scaletti and Barry Truax. She serves on the editorial board of Perspectives of New Music. She was on the International Computer Music Association board of directors or in officer positions for over a decade, serving as its newsletter editor, Vice President for Conferences and President. Early work involved programming the granular synthesis application, StochGran, and Patchmix, an interface to Cmix which compiled instruments in C. She holds a D.M.A. from Columbia University and earlier degrees from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She also practices T'ai chi ch'uan.

Esther Lamneck (clarinet and tárogató) The New York Times calls Esther Lamneck, "an astonishing virtuoso." She has appeared as a soloist with major orchestras, with conductors such as Pierre Boulez, with renowned chamber music artists and an international roster of musicians from the new music improvisation scene. A versatile performer and an advocate of contemporary music, she is known for her work with electronic media including interactive arts, movement, dance and improvisation. Dr. Lamneck served for more than three decades, as full professor at NYU, Steinhardt and artistic director of the NYUNME. She makes frequent solo appearances on clarinet and the tárogató at music festivals worldwide. Many of her solo and Duo CDs feature improvisation and electronic music and include "Cigar Smoke"; "Tárogató"; "Winds Of The Heart"; "Genoa Sound Cards"; "Stato Liquido"; "Trasfigurazioni"; "Sky Rings"; "Small Parts of a Garden", etc. Her latest release with Alejandro Colavita is "Tarogato Reflections" available on Cero Records. Computer Music Journal calls her "The consummate improvisor." New York Music Daily, "Surrealistically Captivating..."; "Esther Lamneck has fascinating chops and ideas" jazz- weekly.com; "È eccezionale la microtonale ricchezza di suono del tárogató" ["the microtonal richness of the sound of the tárogató is exceptional"] Musica Jazz. <http://www.estherlamneck.com/>

BIOGRAPHY

Andrea Vos-Rochefort

An engaging and accomplished clarinetist, Dr. Andrea Vos-Rochefort regularly premieres new works in recital and at Clarinetfest and has performed with the Dayton Philharmonic, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, West Virginia Symphony Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony, Corpus Christi Symphony, Midland-Odessa Symphony, Victoria Symphony, and San Antonio Symphony. Dr. Vos-Rochefort is the Associate Professor of Clarinet at Texas A&M University-Kingsville and previously served as Adjunct Instructor of Clarinet at University of Dayton and Stivers School for the Arts. Andrea studies include a DMA from Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music with Ben Freimuth, MM from Manhattan School of Music with Mark Nuccio, Diplômes Supérieurs in Clarinet and Chamber Music from L'Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris with Guy Deplus, and a BM from Ithaca College with Michael Galvan. She is a proud ReedGeek Artist, Buffet Crampon Performing Artist and Clinician, and Vandoren Artist Clinician.

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