Bowed Electrons 2026

BE @ UCT 2026 programme overview

Date and Times:
6 November 2026 SAST (UTC +2)
Stream:
https://www.theoherbst.com/
Venue:
University of Cape Town, South African College of Music, C07 Chisholm Recital Room

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University of Pretoria

EMORY UNIVERSITY
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LAFAYETTE COLLEGE

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

OBSCURE COMPOSERS AUDIRE EST INVENIRE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

SACM
SOUTH AFRICAN COLLEGE OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



to all participants

Friday 6 November 2026

10h00

Opening

Welcome to Prof. Dizu Plaatjies, Mr Simphiwe Matole and participants

10h15

Concert

Mpho Molikeng

A Day before the Blast
Duration: ~10’

prerecorded discussion
A Day before the Blast
Duration: ~10’

Dimitri Voudouris

EOLIAKI OPSI (Prodromos/Προδρομος) EO22/87/8
Duration: 16’10’’
A computer-generated composition, software programs, site-specific elevation and climatic data from Ag. Ioannis, Prodromos, Farsala, Panagia, and Kastro locations in the province of Thessaly were vital in constructing the various compositions between 2013 - 2024. Grains from musique concrète and electronic sounds created a powerful way to experience complex micro-sound phenomena. Electronic waveforms are sinusoids at specified frequencies. Sampled acoustic waveforms are read from locations with or without frequency alterations. Together, they create sound diagrams of macro-environmental communication paths. The process derives its sound complexity from the amount of control data it receives. The sourcing, classification and categorisation of data from natural environments lead to inherent errors with data limitations. Extra care is needed to accurately represent data in analysing ecological dynamics, to engage and minimise discrepancies within systems.

prerecorded discussion
EOLIAKI OPSI (Prodromos/Προδρομος) EO22/87/8

11h00 - 11h15

tea

11h15 - 13h00

open rehearsal - observers welcome

13h00

Concert

Meryl van Noie

Memory Keeper
Duration: ~10’
discussion
title tbc

Pierre-Henri Wicomb

Centrifuge on a C[ello] String
Duration: ~10’23””
The work is written for acoustic cello, with slight electronic manipulation and soundtrack. The cello part is notated as a form of ‘guided’ improvisation, with its material largely based on a rotational bowing action over the C string, gradually moving towards the section on the other side of the bridge (short, remaining string). This gesture mimics the movement of centrifugal force. The technique is initially presented through two distinct elements (noise and pitch sections), which contribute, in part, to the structuring and development of the soundtrack material.

Much of the tape material is derived from samples of a transient sound (characterised by a quick attack and short decay), similar in character to that of the cello pizzicato. The ‘live’ electronics, although not presented here in real time, function as a kind of intermediary, processing the initial acoustic cello sound and ‘tainting’ its acoustic properties before its unaltered form is revealed. A similar process occurs as the cello completes a musical section.

The cello itself is not performed live; instead, a recording of the improvisation is played back. The improvisation was realised by cellist Carina Venter.

14h00 - 17h00

open rehearsal - observers welcome

17h00

meal for participants

19h00

Concert

Miles Warrington

skeletonfig
Duration: ~10’

The ‘Namaqua Skeletonfig’, a plant also known as kanna, channa, or kougoed, has a long history in indigenous Khoisan cultures for its traditional medicinal and mood-enhancing uses. In traditional music-making practices, the plant was often used as part of trance-inducing rituals during healing dances and other rituals involving complex polyrhythmic sounds accompanied by singing, chanting, bowing, and the playing of other instruments. The sounds heard here are drawn from recordings of interpretations of those long-old imaginary tales and states by Dizu Plaatjies and Simphiwe Matole and morphed into an abstract sound journey. The journey comes full circle as they rejoin the recorded sounds in an improvisatory live performance, alongside the computer.

The work is dedicated to Dizu and Simphiwe.

discussion
skeletonfig

Cameron Harris

The Hills are Alive with the Sound of Kudus
Duration:

discussion
title tbc

Cara Stacey, Adam Mirza, Akiva Zamschek

title tbc
Duration:

discussion
title tbc

Biographies

Adam Mirza

Adam Mirza is Assistant Professor in Composition at Emory University in Atlanta. His research interests include experimental and electronic music, immersive music theater, critical approaches to music technology, avant-garde aesthetics, and DIY concert organizing. At Emory, Dr. Mirza teaches courses involving composition for acoustic instruments, field recording, acousmatic music, live electronic music using Max MSP, and music with video.

Dr. Mirza's works have been presented at the Zürich New Music Days, the DiMenna Center in NYC, the Oleksandr Dovzhenko National Center in Kiev, the North American Saxophone Alliance, the New York Electroacoustic Music Festival, and other venues in the US and abroad. He has worked closely with new music performers and ensembles such as the International Contemporary Ensemble, JACK Quartet, Argento Ensemble, New Thread Quartet, and the Ekmeles Vocal Ensemble.
His recent projects have drawn upon recorded sound, live electronics, and installation to create immersive spaces for experimental musical theater. An exponent of DIY and collective music-making, he has collaborated with young composers and musicians in the over 40 concerts he produced or co-produced through the new music organization Amp, a new music festival, and an NEA funded series "Pairings" at The Tank in NYC.

As a scholar, Dr. Mirza has conducted archival research for his dissertation at the Stockhausen Foundation and Archives, the British Library and the Paul Sacher Archive. His dissertation, Action Aesthetics, applies Hannah Arendt's theories of action, revolution and public judgment to the aesthetic practices of the musical avant-garde, in particular, to Glenn Gould, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and Helmut Lachenmann.

Compositions (scores and audio) can be found on www.adammirza.com.

Akiva Zamcheck

Dr Zamcheck studies what political and economic factors determine the life cycle of small venues and large institutions. He asks how these factors relate to political content in contemporary performance. And he argues that music is slippery, and institutions and artists may claim to support a cause while actually promoting an opposing one. He searches for tools to clarify the dominant role music serves in a given political context. Currently he is studying mid-late 20th-century musicians who repudiated their own work after concluding they had spent their careers playing for the wrong team. How can we avoid such mistakes and try to be precise about the interests we serve when we create, perform, and promote music?

This fall Dr Zamcheck teaches World Music Traditions and Audiodrama. World Music Traditions is a rapid exploration of music and sound in several areas pressed by inter-imperialist conflict. In Audiodrama, we dissect manipulative forms of social media sound and try to subvert them through collaborative projects and analysis.

He views each class as an experiment, asking what makes sense and what's possible given the interests, initiative, and abilities of all involved.

As a graduate student, he rollerbladed straight through the entrance and into an orchestra seat for a performance at the New York Metropolitan Opera. He intends to do it again.

Cameron Harris

Cameron Harris studied composition at the Universities of Edinburgh, Manchester and Pennsylvania during which time his teachers included Nigel Osborne, John Casken, Edward Harper, James Primosch and Jay Reise. He was a Thouron fellow at the University of Pennsylvania and later the recipient of a Benjamin Franklin scholarship. He won the Network for New Music composition competition in Philadelphia and the David Halstead Music Prize for composition at the University of Pennsylvania.

Originally from the UK, Cameron has been based in South Africa since 2006 where he lectures in music at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. He was Chair of NewMusicSA, the South African section of the International Society for Contemporary Music, from 2007 - 2011 and curated many festivals for the organization. His main interests are interactive electronic music composition and the history of electronic music.

Cara Stacey

Cara Stacey is a South African musician, composer and musicologist and was the Standard Bank Young Artist for Music 2021. She is a pianist and plays the umrhubhe, uhadi, makhoyane musical bows. She holds a doctorate in African music, specifically looking at the makhoyane musical bow from Eswatini (University of Cape Town/SOAS). During her PhD, she was an NRF Freestanding Doctoral scholar, a Commonwealth Split-Site scholar, and the recipient of funding from the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust and the University of Cape Town. Cara holds a Masters in Musicology (Edinburgh), and a MMus in Performance from SOAS (London). Cara studied various African instruments (makhoyane, mbira, uhadi, umrhubhe and budongo) with Dizu Plaatjies, Khokhiwe Mphila, Bhemani Magagula, Tinashe Chidanyika, Modou Diouf, and Andrew Cooke.

Dimitri Voudouris

Born in Athens, Greece, a citizen of South Africa is clinical pharmacist and self taught composer who curated UNYAZI the first electro-acoustic music festival and symposium to take part on the African continent in 2005. His technical and theoretical approach researches cognitive psychoacoustic behavioural patterns in humans in an area of continued environmental changes. Theoretical analysis in kinetic motion and cognitive communication between sound and the listener allowed him to formulate biomechanical compositional techniques which assist him in the construction of various building blocks that intern form the backbone of his compositions.

Dizu Plaatjies

Traditional music artist and cultural historian Dizu Zungula Mzikantu Plaatjies was born in Lusikisiki in Mpondoland and, as a child, showed an aptitude for depicting traditional ways. His father, Dr Shadrack Plaatjies, was instrumental in developing his son's artistic needs. As a traditional doctor he made it a point that his children were present to witness every occasion and, when the time came, to participate physically in traditional ceremonies.

Since the formation of his group Amampondo he has travelled world-wide, sharing his cultural exchange ideas with great success. In 1997, after Amampondo's international tour Dizu returned to South Africa and began lecturing African dance and music at UCT. He and his group visited Sweden and Norway in 1998 by invitation of the governments to conduct traditional music sessions in educational institutions in their countries. He has been encouraged by great artists and internationally acclaimed people from all walks of life, among others: Evangelisto Muyanda the great composer of the Bugandan tribe in Uganda, the Austrian Dr Gehard Kubik, transcriber of Ugandan music who specialises in Amadinda xylophone, and the great Cuban drummer Changuito.

Dizu regards his work in communities, educational institutions and with many visiting scholars, as a challenge to the present and future government to respect and conserve the traditional heritage of the people; to see the world through the eyes of the people.

Meryl van Noie

Meryl van Noie holds an MMUS in Jazz Composition and Arrangement under the supervision of Professor Michael Campbell. She is respected as a teacher and music 'technologist' with innovative approaches to music education and a broad range of artistic experience.

Meryl has performed across 'genres', including with the symphonic pops orchestra, in various theatre, corporate productions and performance projects that range from jazz and popular music to experimental and improvisational music. She has experience as a technical contributor, advisor and organiser of various music festivals and productions, including foley sound recording for a production of Hamlet, directed by renowned UK Director Dame Janet Suzman in 2005. Meryl has composed music for projects performed at, amongst others, The Baxter Theatre Centre, Artscape, North Eastern University, Birmingham miniBEAST, Infecting the City and the Transgressive Arts Festival. She has written jazz arrangements, popular music, film music and jingles, multimedia works and electroacoustic music compositions commissioned by New Music SA, the Jazz Art Dance Company, and the Baxter Theatre Centre. Her research

focus is artistic exploration in multimedia, collaborative and interdisciplinary compositional projects. Her creative work is rooted in electroacoustic and jazz traditions with a South African frame of reference.

She previously managed the SoundHouse, housed at the Baxter Theatre Centre and later at the Cape Town Science Centre, teaching music technology to children. Its success over many years transformed it into a non-profit NGO and saw her earn two BASA award nominations for excellence in community outreach. This resulted in Meryl advising various organisations on music technology curriculum development. These include the Western Cape Education Department and the Sci-Bono and KZN Science Centres. She currently serves on the advisory council of the Khula Cape Foundation, previously the Cape Tercentenary Foundation.

As an educator, she has expertise in general jazz studies and music technology specialisations with combined teaching experience of nearly thirty years. She has developed and taught curricula across disciplines, including music theory and technology, jazz piano, ear training, improvisation, composition and ensemble playing. Her teaching philosophy supports a holistic approach to developing resilient musicians. As an active composer, she embraces the shifts in technological advancement, thinking about how it impacts our social fabric and, ultimately, our artistic creativity. She lectures across various course modules at the SACM, including jazz within the historical and social context, jazz theory, ensemble practice, composition and arrangement. She remains focused on innovation in music education.

Miles Warrington

Miles Warrington studied composition with Jürgen Braüninger and Theo Herbst, completing his Doctor of Music degree at the University of Cape Town in 2016. His main interests lie in the fields of electroacoustic music composition, research and performance. Passionate about technology that explores human-computer-interaction (HCI) in the music domain, he investigates technology-art intersections through creative output with the bulk of his academic research exploring heuristics for HCI in the electroacoustic composition space.

Active as a contemporary composer, his music has been performed both locally and internationally. He currently holds the position of senior lecturer and teaches music technology and electroacoustic composition at the University of Pretoria. In 2019, he established South Africa's first academically-centred Laptop Orchestra (UPLOrc) and between 2015 and 2024, served as the composition editor for the Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa.

Mpho Molikeng

Grew up in Maseru, Lesotho in the 1980s, he's always had passion for the arts and in 1994 he attended Motheo FET College then Bloemfontein College and did Fine Arts. Whilst studying in Bloemfontein he enrolled with Performing Arts Council Of Free State (PACOFS) and added acting to his skills and later furthered the craft of Dramatic Arts with Soyikwa Theatre Institute in 1998. Molikeng, has since been heavily involved in innumerable projects in both performance and visual arts. He also added and assumed roles in managerial and strategic positions in his craft. He continues to test his limits in many facets of the arts in a quest to realize a role of the arts in society. He does so by collaborating and challenging stereotypes.

Molikeng is one of the few musicians who plays a host of indigenous musical instruments of Africa and continues to find a new way to make them fashionable to a young generation in the era where technology seems to be taking over and instruments are relegated to just being ornaments. Upon realizing a need to preserve indigenous music of Africa, in particular that of Basotho/Lesotho, he contributed articles to some of the most reputable publications like SAGE International Encyclopedia of Music Culture (Lesotho: History, Culture & Geography of Music) and Music In Africa (https://www.musicinafrica.net/users/mpho-molikeng-0).

He continues to compose music for theatre, yoga, new music and others.

Pierre-Henri Wicomb

Pierre-Henri Wicomb is a South African composer working in musical environments encompassing everything from contemporary acoustic/electroacoustic music, theatre/film soundtracks to composition collaborations with [unrehearsed] audience members. He is currently working on completing his PhD at Africa Open Institute incorporating psychoanalysis as a means to approach composition and free improvisation

Wicomb's music has featured at the Festival D'Automne (Paris), New York City Electronic Music Festival, International Computer Music Conference (Utrecht), Festivalen for Svensk Konstmusik (Stockholm), Forum Wallis contemporary music festival (Leuk, Switzerland) and ISCM World New Music Days, to name a few. Wicomb has been a finalist of the Greek ensemble DissonArt's Miniatures project and Ars Electronica Forum Wallis (Switzerland) call for works. He was the prizewinner for the South Africa New Music Ensemble (SANME) call for scores with his Double Bass Concerto, Ablaze Records (USA) call for works with his piece Role-ing and RMN Classical's (UK) annual electronic composition competition for the electronic work BlaBlaBlaBlaBlavet.

He is the co-founder of the successful annual Purpur Festival (Cape Town) hosting the works and performances of local and international musicians

Simphiwe Matole

Simphiwe Matole is a South African multi-instrumentalist, marimba player, producer and educator, and a founding member of Amampondo, the ensemble established in Langa, Cape Town, in 1979. Through his work with the group, he has helped bring southern African instrumental and vocal traditions to international audiences, contributing to its development from a local performing ensemble into an internationally recognised musical presence.

Born in 1963, Matole attended school in Langa before completing his education in the Transkei. The son of jazz pianist Themba, he also plays piano, although marimba and xylophone became central to his musical career. He developed his skills through a church choir he joined in 1978, where he met Dizu Plaatjies. His performance roles within Amampondo have included soprano marimba, singing and dance.

Matole's recording work includes producing Amampondo's Vuyani and Achisa's debut album, as well as contributing to Barungwa's The Messengers. His international collaborations include work with the electronic music project Juno Reactor: he appears among the Amampondo musicians credited on Shango (2000) and participated in its international tour.

Alongside performance and recording, Matole has participated in music education and community arts initiatives. These include Amampondo's collaboration with Valleys Kids in Wales and the South Africa–Wales project Torchbearers, which brought together musicians, dancers and young performers in 2012.

His more recent activities include contributing to Beyond Culture—Inside Sonic in April 2025, a collaborative concert linking Cape Town and HfG Karlsruhe through live streaming. Bringing South African musical bows into dialogue with electronics, acoustic instruments and experimental sound, the project extends his involvement in contemporary musical collaboration.