

Hum under the riverstone

DXARTS FALL CONCERT

Hum Under the Riverstone

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We asked the stone for an axiom, and it gave us a poem instead

Hum Under the Riverstone explores different forms of connection and dialogue that can unfold among various kinds of intelligences: human, natural, and machinic. The title of this project draws inspiration from Édouard Glissant and his concept of archipelagic thinking.

This poet, playwright, and essayist contrasts two perspectives: that of continental thinking and that of archipelagic thinking. According to Glissant, through continental or systematic thinking “we see the world as a block, or at large, or at once, as a kind of imposing synthesis, just as we can, by way of general aerial views, see the configurations of landscapes and mountainous areas as they pass by”; in contrast, “with archipelagic thinking, one can glimpse the river’s smallest pebbles and the shadow holes in the water that form underneath them, where freshwater crabs still live.”

Thus, this performance seeks precisely to find those shadow holes in the water, that hum under the riverstone, and to ask what other kinds of relationships and connections we might establish between humans and machines.

Hum Under the Riverstone was created through a collaboration of the members of the Human-Machine Interaction Networks Directed Research Group, coordinated by DXARTS Assistant Professor Laura Luna Castillo.

PROGRAM

Amniotic¹

Choreographer: Rose Xu

Performers: Ify Onyekonwu, Mary Jane Senger, Dasha Orlov, Samantha Tien, Emily Jiang, Vincent Le, Samantha Spahr, Rose Xu

Music: Natalia Quintanilla Cabrera

Machine Learning²: Zhuodi (Zoe) Cai, Rose Xu

Video³: Rose Xu

Narrator²: Ify Onyekonwu

Amniotic is a choreographic exploration of memory, touch, and the unseen but ubiquitous forces that carry us. Inspired by the fluid support of amniotic waters, the work traces how tenderness and strength continue to live in the body, unfolding through dance, theater, sound, and projected imagery. It lingers in the space where gestures of care ripple outward like water, where tenderness anchors strength, and where human and machine meet to shape new ways of seeing and being with one another.

Technology is not merely a tool but a collaborator: a bespoke, dance-literate machine that listens, remembers, and responds mindfully to the dancers in real time. Built with wearable sensors and custom motion-recognition techniques, the system learns the vocabulary of the performers’ movement, mapping embodied memory into sound and visual media. This framework supports an environment of fluidity, care, and resonance. On stage, movement, story, and technology converge as one.

Notes:

1. *Inspired by and partially choreographed using Undercurrent dance technique.*
2. *Read more on dance-literate machines and enjoy the full meditation score (narration script is*

adapted from PauseLab):

dxarts.washington.edu/research/creative-work/amniotic

3. *Inspired by and partially created with TouchDesigner sketches by Supermarket Sallad*

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

“Rose” Ziyu Xu (徐子瑜) is a researcher, choreographer, and performer working at the intersection of dance, new media arts, and machine learning. Rejecting the dichotomy of art and science, she explores how shared human questions can be articulated across different disciplinary languages. Rather than complying with AI to generate or replace creative labor, Rose designs artist-centered machine learning systems that deeply listen and respond to lived, embodied experience. Over the past years, Rose’s practice evolved from multimedia dance theater toward interactive systems integrating extended reality and computational intelligence, using the stage as a site to prototype future relationships between bodies, media, and computation. Across these works, Rose investigates how digital systems might engage embodied experience without erasing agency, ambiguity, or care.

Ify Onyekonwu is a Drama Major whose main interests revolve around Performance Studies, Devising, Dance, and Critical Theory.

Natalia Quintanilla Cabrera is an electroacoustic music artist, composer, and multi-instrumentalist from Mexico City. She studied composition and music theory at CIEM in Mexico City and earned an M.A. in Media Arts from the University of Michigan’s School of Music, Theatre & Dance. Her

Wednesday, November 5, 2025. 7:30 pm

Meany Hall for the Performing Arts—Katharyn Alvord Gerlich Theater

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research focuses on 3D and hybrid spatial audio in composition, engaging with social narratives, especially gender violence in Mexico.

Her work has been presented in Mexico, the U.S., Austria (at Ars Electronica in Linz and ORF musikprotokoll in Graz), Düsseldorf, and Slovenia (Festival IZIS), as well as at institutions including the University of Michigan, the University of Gloucestershire, and the University of Colorado Boulder. Her music was featured at the International Computer Music Conference (ICMC), where her research was also published in the proceedings. She was commissioned by the Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth through The Mexican Repertoire Initiative, with wind ensemble works published by The Valley Winds.

Daniel Peterson is an acousmatic composer working with ambisonics. He completed a Master of Music in Composition at the University of Washington with Juan Pampin, and a Ph.D. at the Department for Digital Arts and Experimental Media with Richard Karpen. His compositional interests include spectral analysis, ambisonics, and the exploration of the relationships between literature, philosophy, and music.

Zhuodi (Zoe) Cai is a researcher investigating how technology can empower humanity through cross-disciplinary practice. She is currently with DXARTS at the University of Washington. Before that, she studied at the Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP) at New York University, following her earlier work as an engineer at Air China. Her upcoming 2025 papers on human-machine collaboration in creativity and art, driven by machine learning and artificial intelligence, will be presented at leading international conferences and published in their proceedings, including SIGGRAPH Asia (as sole author) and NeurIPS (with Ziyu Xu and Juan Pampin).

Laura Luna Castillo is a multimedia artist and composer. Originally from Puebla, Mexico, she is currently living and working in Seattle. Her work explores personal and collective identities using intimate and private spaces as politically charged backdrops and complex systems. Making use of VR/XR, Machine Learning, sound, mechatronics and generative storytelling Luna Castillo has developed audiovisual performances, installations and interactive works for MUTEK Montreal, Moss Art's center, EMPAC, Meany Theater, Hello World Festival (Women and Digital Creativity) the BBVA foundation's immersion laboratory at the Center of Digital Culture in Mexico City, Jack Straw Gallery and OnThe Boards theater.

Cristina Brambila. Multimedia artist and curator. She holds a Master's degree in Digital Arts, Motion and Information Technology from the Postgraduate in Arts and Design of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, UNAM, as well as a Bachelor's degree in Visual Arts from the Faculty of Arts and Design of UNAM. She has developed non-formal education projects in different art institutions. She is co-founder of MESETA an interdisciplinary collective dedicated to the research, education and creation of projects on the themes of art, city and technology. She was awarded with the Young Artists Program fellowship (2019-2020 and 2023-2024) by the National Fund for Culture and the Arts, FONCA in the category of New Technologies.

AMNIOTIC

By "Rose" Ziyu Xu (徐子瑜)

Performers:
Ify Onyekonwu,
Mary Jane Senger,
Dasha Orlov,
Samantha Tien,
Emily Jiang,
Vincent Le,
Samantha Spahr,
"Rose" Ziyu Xu (徐子瑜)

Music: Natalia Quintanilla Cabrera
Ambisonic: Daniel Peterson

Machine Learning:
Zhuodi (Zoe) Cai,
"Rose" Ziyu Xu (徐子瑜)

Artistic Director: Laura Luna Castillo
Associate Artistic Director:
Cristina Brambila

Technical Director: Tom Burke
Audio Supervisor: Matt Starritt
Stage Supervisor: Steven Carlino
Studio Theatre Technician: Jess Jones
Lighting Supervisor: Benjamin Mueller

Brochure Design:
Cristina Brambila

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Hillary Grumman)*

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2025

