

Singing machines

A WEEKEND FESTIVAL exploring modern music for voices – both human and electronic – is taking place at the University of Plymouth in February.

The festival showcases the university's centre for computer music research, and has been organised by the university's cultural programme, Peninsula

Arts. The three-day festival of concerts, performances and free lectures, demonstrations and workshops, runs from Friday 24 to Sunday 26 February. All events are free to students.



Karen Wimhurst: 'from the kitchen sink to the bowl of the universe'

The Contemporary Music Festival opens at 7.30pm on Friday 24 February with a concert at the Sherwell Centre featuring Kate and Mike Westbrook, who will perform original works for voice and piano plus interpretations of songs by Kurt Weill and Friedrich Hollaender. The programme is shared with Brazilian pianist and improviser Marcelo Gimenes, who is currently studying for a PhD in Computer Music at the University of Plymouth. Marcelo will perform Brazilian piano music by Eduardo R Miranda and Villa Lobos. Entry is free to students.

Events run through the day on Saturday 25 February in Room 105 of the Scott Building (School of Media and Photography) on the university campus. Eduardo R Miranda, Professor of Computer Music, will present a lecture and workshop on the theme of 'Artificial Phonology: on composing music with surreal languages and disembodied voice'. Professor Miranda will introduce some of the most significant techniques for computer simulation and discuss the manipulation of voice used to produce materials for *Sacra Conversazione*, a short opera featuring human singers and artificially synthesised voices.

John Matthias, Lecturer in Sonic Arts, will direct a 'remix' workshop and performance. The internationally renowned vocalist composer Frances M Lynch will give a lecture on 'The Electronic Voice' and British composer Karen Wimhurst will talk on 'Transformations; from the kitchen sink to the bowl of the universe'.

An evening concert on Saturday 25 February includes Frances

Lynch performing Eduardo Miranda's Sacra Conversazione and the premiere of four new choral settings of Emily Dickinson poems by Karen Wimhurst, performed by the a capella choir Voces directed by Martyn Warren.

On Sunday 26 February, Frances Lynch will direct a workshop: 'Your Electronic Voice'. The workshop offers an opportunity for all-comers to have a go at singing and recording with microphones and will be of interest as much to complete beginners as to experienced voice practitioners. The event is open to participants and observers.



Eduardo Miranda: composing for disembodied voices

The festival closes with a concert at 1pm on Sunday 26 February in Room 105 of the Scott Building, and features brothers Matthew and Daniel Smith performing Voxonics – an amalgamation of vocal and audio snapshots collected and dissected between the years 1987 and 2006. The second part of the programme is a performance of songs from John Matthias, performed by the composer, accompanied by Nick Ryan and Jez Taylor.

Simon Ible, Director of Music at the University of Plymouth, said: "This festival is all about exploring contemporary music for the voice and having fun. We're very pleased to present aspects of our current computer music research and showcase the work of our staff and students, but also to play host to visiting performers. Mike and Kate Westbrook remain at the forefront of contemporary jazz. Frances M Lynch is acclaimed for her eclectic repertoire, which ranges from opera coloratura to experimental vocalising."

Concert tickets are available from Peninsula Arts, 2 Endsleigh Place, University of Plymouth, PL4 8AA. Telephone 01752 238684.

Useful websites

Interdisciplinary Centre for Computer Music Research, Plymouth University

<http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/researchcover/rcp.asp?pagetype=G&page=204>

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