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HUMAN & MACHINE
song contest

CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY ANNOUNCES HUMAN & MACHINE SONG CONTEST, AS PART OF ITS *ILLUMINATIONS*: HUMAN AND MACHINE THEME THIS SEASON

Teams are invited to submit entries March 1 to April 2

A series of free panels and workshops open to the public will explore the Human & Machine creative process

Winners of the Human & Machine Song Contest will be announced in person on Saturday, April 22

Berkeley, February 15, 2023 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley today announces the launch of its songwriting contest as part of the performing arts organization's *Illuminations*: "Human and Machine" themed programming this season. The **Human & Machine Song Contest** invites teams or individuals to create and submit a three- to five-minute previously unpublished song that uses artificial intelligence (AI) or other technologies as a significant part of the songwriting process. In support of the contest, Cal Performances will offer seminars open to the public throughout the spring on topics concerning human and machine collaboration. The Human & Machine Song contest is open to individuals and groups alike, but the creation of each entry must have been led by a UC Berkeley student or faculty or staff member representing any major or discipline. Winners in the categories of Best Composition, Paradigm Shifter, Best Live Performance, and Best Video will be selected through a combination of public voting and the rulings of an expert panel of judges, and will be announced in person at Wheeler Hall on Cal Day, Saturday, April 22.The judging and award ceremony will be open to the public, as will numerous talks and panels held earlier in the day that will explore a wide range of topics related to the "Human and Machine" theme, including authorship and issues of intellectual property, attribution, and the economics of AI music research.

Cal Performances Executive and Artistic Director Jeremy Geffen explains, "When Cal Performances first embarked on the *Illuminations* theme of 'Human and Machine' during fall 2022, we did so with the express intent of exploring our current relationship with technology and to learn how machines have the capacity to enhance and, perhaps, constrain our expressive capacity. The many UC Berkeley students whose education centers on technology or art are affected by this tension, regardless of their field of study. The Human & Machine Song Contest will give students, faculty, and staff a hands-on opportunity to test the boundaries of machine learning and artistic creativity, and to find out how the two can intersect to produce something that will impact our understanding of the potential in human/machine artistic collaboration."

AI Songwriting History on the Berkeley Campus
In August of 2021, two UC Berkeley School of Information students made national headlines as part of the group M.O.G.I.I.7.E.D. which won the second annual international AI Song Contest competition, as announced in Brussels, Belgium. For it, contestants were invited to create a four-minute song using AI to generate melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and lyric ideas. A human vocalist sang lyrics that were generated by a machine and the participants then compiled them by hand into a song. The team's winning song, "Listen to Your Body Choir," used "Daisy Bell," written by Harry Dacre in 1892, as the input "seed" for several AI models that then generated a wide array of melodic and lyric ideas. (The use of "Daisy Bell" has special significance in this context in that it was the first song sung by computer speech synthesis, in a famous demonstration by IBM in 1961, and became cemented in popular culture when sung by HAL 9000 in Stanley Kubrick's classic and visionary film *2001: A Space Odyssey*.) Cal Performances now takes inspiration from M.O.G.I.I.7.E.D.'s success to offer a similar opportunity for Berkeley students and faculty and staff members, and in keeping with the arts presenter's programming theme this year of "Human and Machine."

About *Illuminations*: "Human and Machine"
Every year, Cal Performances, the world-class arts presenter on the Berkeley campus, offers *Illuminations* programming that makes the most of the organization's unique position as part of the country's top-ranked public research university to explore a pressing issue reflected in both the arts and scholarship. This year's "Human and Machine" theme was designed to investigate how technology continues to catalyze and challenge creative expression and human communication. Through programming that includes performances, public events, artist talks, and workshops, "Human and Machine" themed events and activities have examined the evolution of musical instruments, the complex relationships between technology creators and users, technology's impact on the creative process, and questions raised by the growing role of artificial intelligence in our society. This spring, *Illuminations* presentations include the US premiere of William Kentridge's *SIBYL* (March 17–19); the Bay Area premiere of Toshi Reagon and Bernice Johnson Reagon's "congregational opera" based on Octavia E. Butler's dystopian novel *Parable of the Sower* (May 5–6); and Michel van der Aa's chamber opera *Blank Out,* which explores memory and trauma through storytelling that integrates 3D film projection.

An *Illuminations* Design Committee is made up of UC Berkeley faculty, staff, and students with relevant expertise to each year's theme. Design Committee Members this year include David Bamman, Associate Professor at UC Berkeley's School of Information; Deidre English, Continuing Lecturer at the Graduate School of Journalism; Edmund Campion, Director of Center for New Music and Audio Technology (CNMAT); Ehud "Udi" Isacoff, Director Of the Berkeley Brain Initiative at UC Berkeley; Greg Niemeyer, cofounder of UC Berkeley's Center For New Media, Human Technology Futures; Jennifer Urban, Clinical Professor Of Law at UC Berkeley, and co-director of the Berkeley Center for Law & Technology. The committee has been actively involved in creating the song contest, as have campus partner organizations the Center for Law and Technology and the Center for New Music and Technology (CNMAT.) Learn more about the members of the *Illuminations* Design Committee here.

Details of the Human & Machine Song Contest
The Human & Machine Song Contest is open to anyone with an interest in music, technology, or the integration and evolution of the two. Team collaboration is strongly encouraged, and solo student entries are also welcome. For those looking for teammates, Cal Performances offers a forum

for finding others with similar interests to connect possible contest collaborators. The creation of every entry must be led by a Cal student or faculty or staff member.

Song entries are required to be a three- to five-minute previously unpublished song that uses artificial intelligence (AI) or other technologies as a significant part of the songwriting process. The songs may be about any theme or subject, but to help inspire creativity, a recommended theme is to focus on humanity's relationship with technology.

Song contest entrants will be asked to submit a report that introduces their team and describes how they used technology or AI, data, and original material, all of which will inform the jury's selections. Videos and cover art for song entries (which may or may not use machines/AI) are also encouraged.

The winning songs will be evaluated for the most innovative use of, or creative critique of, technology.

A Zoom webinar about the Human & Machine Song Contest will be offered at noon on Friday, March 3. Links to join this webinar and all information about the contest can be found at humanmachinesong.com.

Seminars focusing on creative technologies, which may be useful for song contest participants and others interested in this topic will take place beginning February 24. All seminars are open to the public. Topics will include AI machines (Fri, Feb 24 at 11am with John Gillick), writing and AI, music and intellectual property, and music and AI. Information about the seminars will continue to be updated at humanmachinesong.com/seminars.

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