



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF MUSIC

**Nolan Hildebrand, Composition**

DMA Recital

This recital is in partial fulfilment of the Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition.  
Nolan Hildebrand is a student of Kotoka Suzuki.

Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 12:30 pm | Walter Hall, 80 Queen's Park

Urbanite//Troglodyte (2024)

for 8 loudspeakers

[Incidental Music #1] (2025)

for 8 loudspeakers

generative open graphic score #1(2023)

Colin Fischer (saxophone)  
Nolan Hildebrand (mixer feedback)

[Incidental Music #2] (2025)

for 8 loudspeakers

Raw Data Speed Demons (2025)

Roan Ma (violin)  
Nolan Hildebrand (electronics)

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*We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.*

As part of the Faculty's commitment to improving Indigenous inclusion, we call upon all members of our community to start/continue their personal journeys towards understanding and acknowledging Indigenous peoples' histories, truths and cultures. Visit [indigenous.utoronto.ca](http://indigenous.utoronto.ca) to learn more.

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[Incidental Music #3] (2025)

for 8 loudspeakers

portals II (everywhere and everything right now) (2022)

Colin Fischer (saxophone)  
Patrick O'Reilly (electric guitar)  
Chris Weins (drum set)  
Louis Pino (percussion)  
Nolan Hildebrand (mixer feedback)

## **INTERMISSION**

[Incidental Music #4] (2025)

for 8 loudspeakers

Black Galaxie (2025)

Nolan Hildebrand (modular synthesizer)

[Incidental Music #5] (2025)

for 8 loudspeakers

knurl cracked green (2023-2025)

Veronica Zupanic (violin)  
Patrick O'Reilly (electric guitar)  
Hirad Moradi (piano)  
Nolan Hildebrand (electronics)

[Incidental Music #6] (2025)

for 8 loudspeakers

DADA BENDER (2023)

Jasmine Tsui (percussion)  
Nikki Huang (percussion)  
Hoi-Tong Keung (percussion)  
Louis Pino (percussion)  
Bevis NG (percussion)  
Thomas Li (percussion)  
Nolan Hildebrand (electronics)

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Nolan Hildebrand is a composer and noise artist based in Toronto, Canada. Nolan's music explores conceptual and physical extremities to create intense and engaging music. His sonic interests are centered around noise, density, and physicality. Nolan writes music for acoustic instruments, electroacoustic music, acousmatic music, and performs in an experimental solo noise project dubbed BLACK GALAXIE.

Nolan's music has been performed at major festivals around the world including Darmstädter Ferienkurse (GER), International Computer Music Conference (ICMC) (CN), Forum Wallis (CH), New Interfaces for Musical Expression (NIME) (NL), and Bang on a Can LOUD Weekend (USA). He has had opportunities to work with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Bozzini Quartet, ECM+ Ensemble, XelmYa Ensemble, Jonny Axelsson, Mark Stewart, Nick Photinos etc. He has participated in masterclasses with Stefan Prins, Ana Sokolovic, and Malin Bång. Nolan has presented his music and research at ICMC 2023 (CN), SPLICE Festival 2023 (US), the Anestis Logothetis Centenary Symposium 2021 (GR), the CeReNeM Composers' Colloquia (UK), and the 2022 Korean Electro Acoustic Music Society's Annual Conference (KOR).

Nolan completed his BMus in composition with Dr. Gordon Fitzell and Örjan Sandred at the University of Manitoba and an MMus in composition under the supervision of Dr. Eliot Britton at the University of Toronto. He is currently pursuing a DMA at the University of Toronto with a focus on electroacoustic music and graphic notation under the guidance of Dr. Kotoka Suzuki.

## **PROGRAM NOTES**

### **Incidental Music 1-6**

This incidental music acts as is transition music between pieces. It is meant to create a more immersive concert experience.

### ***Urbanite//Troglodyte***

*Urbanite//Troglodyte* is an autobiographical acousmatic work for 8 loudspeakers. The title of the piece refers to my life as a composer and student living in an urban metropolis. I spend much of my time working in front of a computer—often in basements and other subterranean spaces. Spending time on a computer also leads to lots of streaming and social media etc. As such, the work utilizes internet sourced sounds that appear in my 'feed' (music, news, arm wrestling videos, fail videos, etc.) together with sonified electromagnetic frequencies (invisible/inaudible sounds emitted from devices like computers, phones, tablets etc.), synthesized sounds, and kitchen sounds from my everyday life. These inside sounds are combined, juxtaposed, and scrambled with outside sounds from my everyday life (birds, cars, buses, people etc.). This inside/outside dichotomy creates an ever changing fast paced collage of sounds that constantly interrupt and undermine each other to parallel the excess and noise of the modern world.

### **generative open graphic score #1(2023)**

*generative open graphic score #1* is an interactive electroacoustic work for solo instrument patched into a mixer with feedback loops. Mixer feedback (aka no-input mixer) is a technique where the outputs of a mixer are routed back into its inputs to create feedback loops. Manipulating the mixers, faders, and dials manipulates the feedback in unforeseeable ways. Although the feedback can be manipulated, it also behaves semi-autonomously without any human interaction. When an instrument is routed into the mixer the sounds and timbres of the instrumentalist and the mixer feedback synthesize together. One of the most interesting and interactive components of the setup is that the instrument's amplitude and melodic gestures can augment the behaviour of the electronic sounds. In performance, another mixer performer plays the mixer to create a trio situation consisting of the instrumentalists, the mixer performer, and the semi-autonomous feedback. I have dubbed this chaotic system "Instrumentalist Mixer Feedback Transmutation". Interpreting this digital graphic notation through this unpredictable and interactive electroacoustic setup further compounds the sonic spontaneity of the piece.

### **Raw Data Speed Demons (2025)**

*Raw Data Speed Demons* is an interactive electroacoustic work for violin and electronics. In the piece, the violin interacts with a computer and triggers random changes to a sampler containing hundreds of raw data sonifications. The sample changes occur at blistering speeds, hence the title of the work. Throughout the work, the violinist is instructed to mimic and battle against the chaotic sampling system to create complex and entropic textures.

### **portals II (everywhere and everything right now) (2022)**

*portals II (everywhere and everything right now)* is the second piece in a series of graphic scores entitled *portals*. The graphic score created for *portals II* explores sonic noise and the many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics. "The quantum-mechanical "Schrödinger's cat" paradox according to the many-worlds interpretation. In this interpretation, every quantum event is a branch point; the cat is both alive and dead, even before the box is opened, but the 'alive' and 'dead' cats are in different branches of the multiverse, both of which are equally real, but which do not interact with each other." The graphic score for *portals II* contains many discrete "sound universes" (branches of the multiverse) that are represented through various types of visual noise meant to invoke noisy sounds from their respective instruments. To interpret the score, performers begin in their own separate "sound universes". Throughout the work, they can choose to stay in their own separate "sound universe" or they can take portals (represented as coloured shapes) to the perceived "sound universe" of other performers and musically interact.

### **Black Galaxie (2025)**

Black Galaxie is my solo noise project. For this performance, I am improvising on a modular synthesizer which triggers changes in an audio reactive video patch.

### **knurl cracked green (2023-2025)**

*knurl cracked green* is a work that explores noise, excess, and saturation. It integrates concepts of noise music and metal music into an electroacoustic chamber work.

Knurl is a ridged texture on a metal surface that is usually used to aid in gripping. Although this composition was generated, informed, and inspired by sound rather than extra musical concepts, I found the image of an old rusty piece of metal with green mold to be a fitting visual counterpart (it also makes a nice title). These complex webs of rust in knurled metal can be viewed as abstract expressionist works that embody a junk art aesthetic that is reflected in the sound of the music.

### **DADA BENDER (2023)**

*DADA BENDER* was created from noisy electronic sounds derived from raw data sonifications and improvisations on a no-input mixer. Raw data sonification is the process of mapping aspects of data to produce sound signals. Sonifying raw data often creates harsh glitchy digital noise and is sometimes referred to as data bending. No-input mixing creates sound by routing a mixer's outputs back into its inputs to create feedback loops. Like raw data sonification, no-input mixing creates sound by misusing and bending technology. These noisy, skronky sounds were then chopped, quantized, arranged, into the rhythms, gestures, and noises that were then orchestrated for the six performers.

Many of these ideas find their beginnings in Dadaism. Dadaism inherited the term *anti-art* from Marcel Duchamp which challenges accepted definitions of art. Noise Music has constantly challenged the idea of what music and art is through its relentless abstract form, ugly sounds, and high amplitude. The connections between Noise Music and Dadaism are strong and evident today as can be seen with the Godfather of Noise Music, Merzbow who derives his stage name from Kurt Schwitters concept of Merz.