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Beyond the Machine: Originality, Creativity, Exploration

By TONI MARIE MARCHIONI

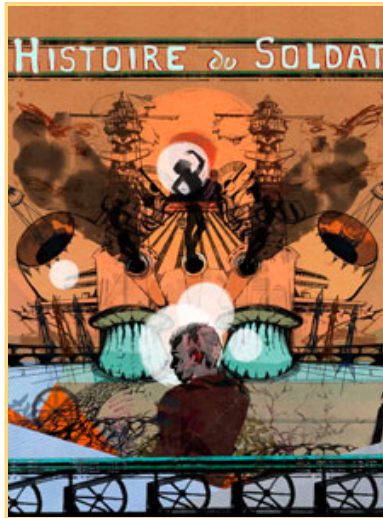
Though Juilliard's Beyond the Machine festival focuses on merging music and technology, it is also about so much more. The festival, which is hosted by the Music Technology Center, celebrates its 11th year with performances from March 24 through 27. At its heart are multidisciplinary collaboration, opportunities for state-of-the-art mixed media performances, and the desire to foster in students and recent alumni a love for originality, creativity, and exploration.

Faculty member Edward Bilous, the director of both the Music Technology Center and Beyond the Machine, said in a recent interview that the center and festival are designed to give "young artists an opportunity to really become themselves. In other words, I don't necessarily try to impose a creative vision on an individual program. But I try to find creative young talent and spirit and give them an opportunity to become who they want to be." This environment of discovery has led to many student- and recent alumni-driven works, which Bilous describes as "key to the success of the program." This year the festival will present two programs over the course of four days that highlight works imagined and performed by students and recent alumni.

The first program (March 24-25) features a multimedia staging of Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat*, directed and conceived by Yara Travieso (B.F.A. '09, *dance*). Bilous describes Travieso's setting, which includes film, stage design, and choreography, as "absolutely extraordinary. Visually, it is stunning." It will be performed by students and alumni from the Music, Drama, and Dance divisions.

Bilous said he has received some quizzical comments from musicians and colleagues about the theatricality of B.T.M.'s upcoming performance of *Histoire*. "My response has always been that Stravinsky's real home was in the theater. He spent more time working with choreographers and directors than he did with musicians," Bilous explained. "He was a collaborative artist—so many of his great works, whether they were the ballets or operas, involved collaborations with other art forms. I think to a great degree we are really honoring the spirit of the piece by making it a multimedia event."

The other B.T.M. program (March 26-27) centers on *Nightmaze* by alumnus Sebastian Currier (M.M. '87, D.M.A. '92, *composition*). This multimedia work is scored for live instrumental ensemble, spoken voice, digitally processed sound, and film. The music, narration, and animation are tightly intertwined to evoke a dark and enormous interstate as found in the nightmare of a sleep-deprived college student. Calling *Nightmaze* a "very powerful multimedia piece," Bilous also explained that it is one of great artistic merit. While



The 11th edition of the Beyond the Machine festival opens with two performances of Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat*. (Illustration by Ryan Hartley)

EVENT INFORMATION

Beyond the Machine

Rosemary and Meredith
Willson Theater
Thursday, March 24,
through Saturday, March
26, at 8 p.m., and Sunday,
March 27, at 3 p.m.

Event Calendar

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some electro-acoustic works sacrifice musical integrity in favor of flashy technology, *Nightmaze* is not one of them. “It’s a very demanding work for the ensemble to play,” he said. “It takes a great day of skill and time to pull it together technically.”

Also featured with *Nightmaze* will be two works created by Juilliard students in collaboration with professional video and digital artists from the Streaming Museum, a new hybrid museum that presents multimedia exhibitions in cyberspace and in public spaces around the world. “Inventing Wonderland” is based on a digital text visualization called “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland Text-Arc” by artist W. Bradford Paley, with original music by Michelle Ross for string quartet with electronics and dramatic interpretation. “HD Traffic” is based on an installation of the same name by artist John Simon, with original music by John Chin for jazz quartet with interactive electronics. There will also be several video montages by Streaming Museum artists.

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