



Forum Acusticum 2026 Concert

Between Nature and Machines

Wednesday, 09.09.2026
20:00 and 21:30 (same program)
György-Ligeti-Hall, MUMUTH
Lichtenfelsgasse 14, 8010 Graz

Between Nature and Machines

Our daily audible environment is a continuum just like that. What could illustrate it better than browsing the areas of Forum Acusticum 2026: from bioacoustics to industrial vibration, from music to speech—sounds we perceive and sounds we make. Artistic expression responds to the full spectrum of that reality, within various musical traditions and beyond.

Daniel Mayer

Program

Benedikt Alphart

Off the Rails

multichannel fixed media (2023)

Billy Strayhorn

Take the A Train (1939)

eden ahbez

Nature Boy (1947)

Wayne King, Victor Young

Beautiful Love (1931)

Egbert Van Alstyne

Ina Thomann

INSIGHTS INSIDE MACHINES I

for DC motors, live electronics,
and video projection (2022)

Joseph Böhm

Serendipity 512/2600

semi-modular synth performance
with video projection (2026)

LEKO Quartet

Lena Kovalchuk (Ukraine)

drums

Natalia Yemelianova (Ukraine)

vocals, flute

Anil Bilgen (Türkiye)

piano

Valdis Dominieks (Latvia)

bass

Stefan Warum

sound direction

Lukas Rieder

sound direction

Off the Rails

Off the Rails is an acousmatic composition based on recordings of a heritage steam railway in rural Austria. It uses composition as a means of articulating personal observations of the recorded scene—observations that may otherwise remain inaccessible to listeners of field recordings.

Re-listening to a recording can evoke lived experience in the recordist, yet that experience does not reside in the recording itself. This creates a perceptual divide between artist and audience.

By composing with and intervening in the material, I guide the listener's attention towards particular details. Sonic transformations introduce further dimensions of my listening, including the use of ultrasonic material. The piece's form relates to the idea of flow, referencing the rushing-by of the train.

INSIGHTS INSIDE MACHINES I

At the heart of this self-built instrument are two motors with makeshift propellers and attached contact microphones, extended by a laptop that generates a feedback loop. The motors run at the very edge of their driving force. Will they complete a rotation, or stall after a brief halt? Here, it's the motors that hinder themselves: the motor's audio signal alters the speed of the oscillator driving it, which in turn changes the audio signal again. This lets the motor accelerate itself but also block and repeatedly stall itself. Once turning, you find yourself following this forward motion, made visible through live video projection, only to be thrown off again and again, as the rhythm shifts.

Serendipity 512/2600

What happens when you look for something without knowing what you are looking for?

Serendipity 512/2600 is an improvisation with two replicas of the ARP 2600 semi-modular synthesizer. Rather than working towards a predetermined result, I use repetition and familiarity with the instruments to build a framework in which something unexpected can occur—an approach, not an outcome. The four outputs of the synthesizers are spatialized in quadraphonic sound and simultaneously drive an overlaid XY-scope visualization, so the sound becomes directly visible as it unfolds. By interweaving the channels, different relationships between the two synthesizers produce continuously changing visual forms.

Serendipity cannot be produced on purpose. It can only be noticed—often only in hindsight, sometimes by the performer, sometimes by the listener. The piece asks less “did something happen?” than “who gets to recognize it, and when?”

Benedikt Alphart (*1998) is a composer, sound artist, and curator based in Graz, Austria. His recent work often engages with “inaudible sounds”: sounds encountered in remote places or situated beyond the perceptible range of the frequency spectrum. His artistic output encompasses acousmatic, instrumental, and audiovisual compositions, as well as sound installations, which have been presented internationally. Alongside his artistic practice, Benedikt Alphart has curated the concert series *KULTUM – Neue Musik* at the Kulturzentrum bei den Minoriten in Graz since 2023.

Ina Thomann is an electroacoustic composer and sound artist based in Graz, Austria. Trained in Computer Music and Sound Art at the University of Art in Graz, they are currently pursuing a Doctorate at the Center for Artistic Research on the potential of duration in compositionally performative sound installations. In 2025, Thomann was awarded the “Staatsstipendium für Komposition” by the Austrian Federal Government, and several of their works have received funding from the SKE Fonds. Their practice is conceptual and research-driven, rooted in self-programmed sounds, field recordings, and self-built instruments. Their work has been presented internationally, including in Detroit, Kraków, Stockholm, Vienna, and Graz.

Joseph Böhm is a sound artist, researcher and musician working between improvisation, electronic music and experimental performance. His practice explores experimentation, participation and interaction between sound, technology and space.

LEKO Quartet brings together four musicians from Ukraine, Türkiye and Latvia, united by jazz and a shared interest in improvisation, interaction and musical storytelling.

For this program, the quartet explores contrasting perspectives on the human experience within a modern, urban world. *Take the A Train*, made famous by Duke Ellington as the signature of his orchestra, evokes the pulse of the city – movement, rhythm and infrastructure, almost like a musical machine in constant motion. In contrast, *Nature Boy* turns towards the individual: a mysterious wanderer whose journey leads to a simple yet universal insight into the importance of loving and being loved. *Beautiful Love* continues this human perspective from a more immediate and emotional angle, exploring love, longing and vulnerability.