2018

TEDxUniversityofPittsburgh (re)Think

March 31, 2018 | William Pitt Union

Welcome.

Thank you for joining us for our fourth annual TEDx event.

TEDxUniversityofPittsburgh is a local event organized by University of Pittsburgh students - we aim to bring people together to share a TED-like conference experience. Our team has been hard at work for a year preparing this conference. We are excited to share with you today ideas worth spreading.

Theme

Our theme this year: (re)Think. We have curated a series of talks that challenge our audience to "rethink" the world around us.

Stage Design

Reflecting on this year's theme of "rethink", this stage installation is made of reused materials harvested from around the city. This piece was inspired by Pittsburgh's past as a steel town, and how investment in technology, the arts, and higher education has transformed it into what it is today. It is only through the efforts of today's speakers that some of these advancements and the intersection of these industries have been made possible. This piece was created by architecture students at the University of Pittsburgh. The artists are Joy Wang, Anika Shah, Jack Weinfeld, William Woods, Caleb Lefever, and Maria Hernández.

Materials include reused wood, copper, flooring, corrugated plastic, and LED lights.

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Schedule

Check-In | 10 - 11 a.m.

Assembly Room | First Session | 11 - 12:30 p.m.

    Jasiri X, Konstantinos Pelechrinis, Andrew Schwartz

Ballroom | Performance and Intermission | 12:30 – 2 p.m.

    The Besozzi Trio

    Refreshments

Check-In | 1:30 p.m. – 2 p.m.12:30

Assembly Room | Second Session | 2 – 4 p.m.

    Satvika Neti, Dan Lockton

Thank you

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Meet our Speakers

Jasiri X

Jasiri X is the first independent hip-hop artist to be awarded an Honorary Doctorate, which he received from Chicago Theological Seminary in 2016. This recognition grew out of the spiritual/political urgency and artistic vision he shared on songs like "Justice For Trayvon" and "Strange Fruit", which documented the unjust police killings of young Blacks in the Millennial Generation. Likewise, he has been deeply involved with the national Movement for Black Lives, working with organizations like The Gathering for Justice, Blackout for Human Rights, BYP100 and Sankofa. Still, he remains rooted in the Pittsburgh based organization he founded, 1Hood Media, which teaches youth of color how to analyze and create media for themselves. He has performed his music from the Smithsonian to the Apollo Theater and has discussed his views on hip-hop, race, and politics at leading institutions across the nation, including Harvard University, the University of Chicago, Yale, and Stanford, among others. One of the most important political voices of his generation, in 2017 he received the Nathan Cummings Foundation Fellowship to start the 1Hood Artivist Academy. Jasiri is also a recipient of the USA Cummings Fellowship in Music, and the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Artist as Activist Fellowship.
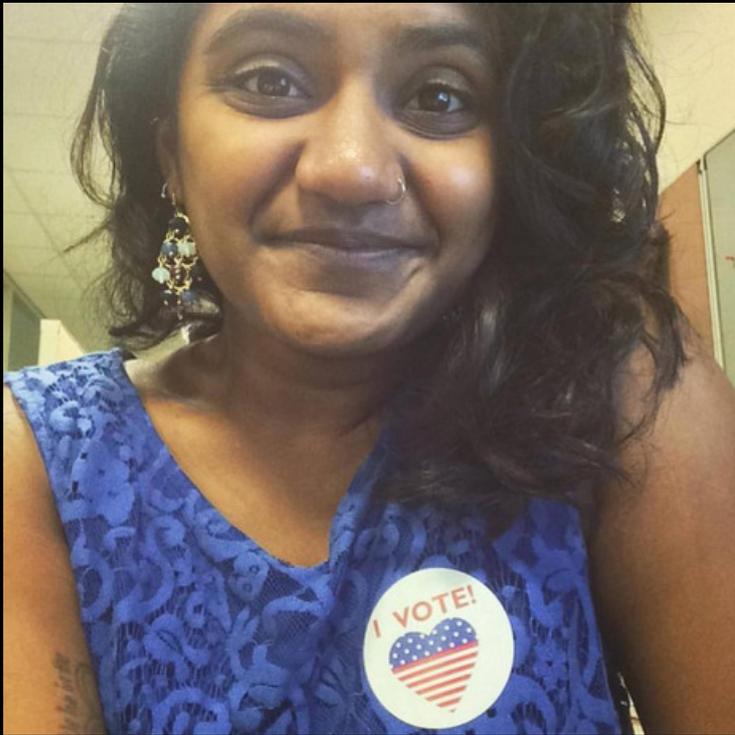
Konstantinos Pelechrinis

Konstantinos (Kostas) Pelechrinis is an associate professor at the School of Computing and Information at the University of Pittsburgh where he heads the Network and Data Science Lab. He received his PhD from the Computer Science Department at the University of California at Riverside (UCR), while prior to that he received his undergraduate diploma from the Electrical and Computer Engineering department at the National Technical University of Athens, Greece. His research is focused on network science, data mining and applied machine learning, with an emphasis on applications in urban science and sports analytics. His research is funded by the National Science Foundation and the Army Research Office (2015 Young Investigator Award recipient), while it has also been featured in popular media outlets.

Andrew Schwartz

Dr. Schwartz received his Ph.D. in Physiology from the University of Minnesota in 1984. He then went on to a postdoctoral fellowship at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine where he worked with Dr. Apostolos Georgopoulos, who was developing the concept of directional tuning and population-based movement representation in the motor cortex. In 1988, Dr. Schwartz began his independent research career at the Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix. That work showed how a high fidelity representation of movement intention could be extracted from the motor cortex. Schwartz teamed up with colleagues at Arizona State University to develop cortical neural prosthetics before moving to the Neurosciences Institute in San Diego in 1995 and then to the University of Pittsburgh in 2002.

After demonstrating that monkeys could use this technique to control arm prostheses in a self-feeding task, orient a prosthetic hand, and control the fingers when grasping, this approach was demonstrated in two paralyzed subjects who operated a high-performance prosthetic arm and hand. Tactile feedback sensed by the prosthetic hand is being fed back to stimulating electrodes to impart sensation as part of our ongoing work to extend this technology to manipulation and dexterous behavior.

Satvika Neti

Satvika Neti works at the Women and Girls Foundation as a Digital Social Justice Advocate, working to bridge the gap between tech and social impact. She graduated in May 2016 from Carnegie Mellon University with a BS in International Relations and a minor in Computer Science, and in May 2017 from the Coro Fellowship in Public Affairs.

She has co-founded multiple programs and initiatives, including Rangoli Pittsburgh, Beyond the Binary, Moneythink CMU, and worked at the ACLU of Pittsburgh as well as many organizations in Washington, DC, such as the Center for American Progress and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

She also serves on Mayor Peduto's recently established LGBTQIA+ Advisory Council. Her favorite color is lime green, she has a lot of feelings about the constitution, and can usually be found in line for Chipotle.

Dan Lockton

Dan Lockton is Chair of Design Studies at Carnegie Mellon School of Design, and leads the Imaginaries Lab, a new research/teaching platform. His research centers on questions of how the design of the systems around us interacts with our understanding of the world, and how to develop new ways to understand, and ultimately new ways to live, as part of a transition to more sustainable societies, socially and ecologically. Current research topics include developing design tools to work with new metaphors, qualitative and analog interface design, investigating mental models of local government, and ambient sonification of energy data. Dan joined CMU in 2016 from the Royal College of Art, London, where he worked from 2013–16, as a researcher and tutor at the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design and the Innovation Design Engineering program. Dan's earlier research, including his PhD at Brunel University London, focused on exploring design for behavior change, applied through roles in sustainability-related research projects including a collaboration with the UK Department of Energy and Climate Change, and SusLabNWE, a European Living Lab project. Dan has an MPhil in Technology Policy from the University of Cambridge, and a BSc in Industrial Design Engineering from Brunel.

Meet our Performers

The Besozzi Trio

Pictured (left to right): Daniel Muller, Hyun Joo Park, and Xiang Ji

The Besozzi Trio uses the under-explored medium of saxophones and piano to recreate the classic piano trio as a bold, new sound adapted to the modern day. The trio's dynamic repertoire consists exclusively of works from the last century, emphasizing its potential as a voice for new music while celebrating its roots in the centuries-old tradition of chamber music. With three individual home countries, the members of Besozzi attribute much of their success to their diversity, giving testament to music's power to transcend the barriers raised by differences in language, culture, and experience. The group's name comes from a prominent 18 th -century family of wind players, celebrating our unique sound, our classical roots, and our sense of community. The trio has recently been selected to advance to the Quarterfinals for the 2018 Fischoff National Chamber Music Competition at the University of Notre Dame this May.

Hyun Joo Park

Born in Seoul, South Korea, Hyun Joo Park graduated Artist Diploma at Duquesne University. She earned her doctoral degree in Piano Performance and her master's in Piano Performance and Pedagogy with a full scholarship at Penn State University. Since Hyun Joo made a debut at Carnegie Music Recital Hall in New York, she has appeared as an active performer. She gave recitals in several prestigious venues in Korea, France and the USA. She has won numbers of awards in international competitions. Currently, she has formerly served as a judge member at the Pittsburgh International Piano Competition and as a staff pianist at Duquesne University and the First Presbyterian Church at Bakerstown. She also is a manager and instructor at Pittsburgh Piano Academy.

Xiang Ji

Xiang Ji. 24 years old, born and raised in Beijing, China. He earned his bachelors degree from the Central Conservatory of Music, he is now studying with professor James Houlik in Duquesne University. In 2015, he performed a new piece called <Strange Library> at the 17th World Saxophone Congress with Sostenuto Saxophone Quartet in Strasbourg, France and won great popularity in the world saxophone area. He also participated the "2015 International Competition of Young Musicians Ohrid Pearls" in Macedonia and won the third prize of adult group (The 1st prize vacancy).

Daniel Muller

Saxophonist Daniel Muller is currently pursuing his M.M. degree at Duquesne University, where he studies with James Houlik. He holds a B.M. from the Baldwin Wallace Conservatory, where his primary teacher was Greg Banaszak. Muller has played in masterclasses with Keith Young, Tong Yang, Olli-Pekka Tuomisalo, Doug Masek, and the Mana Quartet, and was an apprentice at the 2014 National Music Festival in Chestertown, Maryland. At the 2018 Navy Band Saxophone Symposium at George Mason University, Muller presented a lecture-recital entitled "The Saxophone and the Third Reich". Muller originally hails from Cleveland, Ohio, where he actively performs in a variety of musical settings.

Jun Nagao, Paganini Lost

There are a lot of pieces that toy with the theme from Paganini's 24th Caprice, Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody most famously, but in the 2008 piece Paganini Lost, Japanese composer Jun Nagao takes a unique approach to his experiment. Jazzy grooves, soaring melodies, and virtuosic solos all make their way into the journey from a bewildering opening to a boisterous close.

Wolfgang Jacobi, Barcarole

The barcarole is the song of the Venetian gondolier, its moderate, lilting pulse mimicking the stroke of the oar. Wolfgang Jacobi's piece in this tradition starts in a dark, brooding mood before finding a light, free-spirited energy which is ultimately overpowered by the opening gravitas.

Sherwood Shaffer, Jack-in-the-Box

Originally intended to be played as an encore, Jack-in-the-Box by American composer Sherwood Shaffer is a brisk three-minute thrill-ride jam-packed with virtuosic passages for each player. It takes the form of the toy whose name it takes, beginning with the sound of the saxophones "winding up" before surprising the audience with a relentless web of winding melodies.

Gary Schocker, Three Dances

The Three Dances by Gary Schocker showcase the New York flautist's sense of humor and penchant for melody. "Easy Going" features a simple, laidback tune juxtaposed with a fiery tango, with unexpected jolts, dramatic pauses, and rhythmic hiccups throughout. "Moody" is slow and introspective, starting with a mournful theme reminiscent of Piazzola that eventually finds a more peaceful demeanor. "Coffee Nerves" places the two saxophones in a frantic unison with honks and growls along the way to convey the jittery effect of caffeine.

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