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2024 NEO Concert ExplOratorio
Uncanny: An Open Letter To A.I.
 Saturday, June 29, 2024 @ 7 PM
 First Congregational Church of Los Angeles

David Harris, Laurel Irene, Fahad Siadat, Directors
 Abraham Ross, Organ Scholar, Owen Spicer, Organ Fellow

Program

The Myth Of Talos Alexandra Reyna
Mariah Rae, Soloist

you made me Molly Pease
 electronics by Cristina Lord
Molly Pease and Chloé Vaught, Soloists

For an Artificial Intelligence Considering Self-Awareness Tanner Pfeiffer

3 Quechua Interjections Fabricio Cavero Farfan
Rohan Ramanan, Tanner Pfeiffer, and Menghe Jing, Soloists

If Not Numbers Aria Gittelson
Margaret McGlynn, Soloist, Aria Gittelson, Electronics

Sydney Sam Scheibe
Estelle Ocegueda and Matthew Brown, Soloists

is this the Song of god? garrett obrycki
garrett obrycki, Rachel Day, and Rebecca Kidnie, Soloists

Feedback Alex Barsom
Mana Contractor, Soloist

HarmonAI Lauren Spavelko
Rebecca Kidnie, Soloist

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Molly Pease, Emma Ginzal, and Alexandra Reyna, Soloists

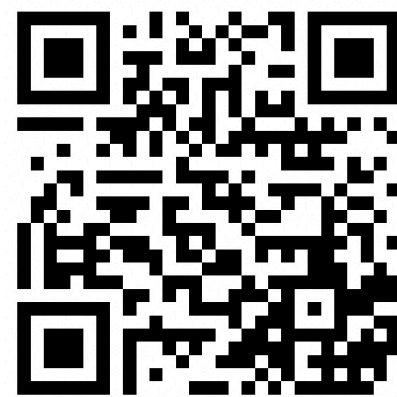
InSpecter Circuit Kevin Patel
Molly Burke, Rohan Ramanan, Chloé Vaught, and garrett obrycki, Soloists

Synapsis Matthew Brown
*Chloé Vaught, Margaret McGlynn, Mana Contractor, garrett obrycki,
Fabricio Cavero Farfan, and Matthew Brown*

Deemed Extraneous Jeremy Davlos
Fabricio Cavero Farfan, Soloist

Look Jaz Jendersee

Program Notes



Scan the QR code for the full Program Notes

2024 N.E.O. Festival Ensemble

Fabricio Cavero Farfan	Jaz Jendersee	Mariah Rae
Mana Contractor	Menghe Jing	Rohan Ramanan
Alex Barsom	Áhzi Kharmóna	Alexandra Reyna
Matthew Brown	Rebecca Kidnie	Rohan Ramanan
Molly Burke	Margaret McGlynn	Sam Scheibe
Jeremy Davlos	garrett obrycki	Lauren Spavelko
Rachel Day	Estelle Ocegueda	Owen Spicer
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The N.E.O. Voice Festival

The **N.E.O. Voice Festival** is an annual new music festival that attracts an international, vibrant and diverse community of artists for a week of creativity, performance, and exploration. By attending one of our performances, you witness the future of choral and vocal music: composers, performers, and conductors codifying and putting into practice the cutting edge of vocal performance and composition. We hope to see you at our three concerts this summer!

Join us at the 2025 **N.E.O. Voice Festival July 26 - August 2, 2025** for
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The Resonance Collective exists to inspire and nurture the collective spirit of Los Angeles and beyond by expanding our understanding of the arts as a sacred and mystical experience, through the creation and performance of innovative and adventurous music. We further this mission through three methods: **creation, curation, and education.**

We **create** interdisciplinary, theatrical narratives based on spiritual transformation as part of our Original Works program.

We **curate** exceptional music from traditions around the world through the Golden Thread Concert Series. Each event extends on the ritual of the traditional concert experience and offers a different perspective on the possibilities of sacred music.

We **educate** creative musicians during the annual N.E.O. Voice Festival, a week long celebration of the human voice with a focus on redefining the oratorio as a modern sacred storytelling form, holistic contemporary vocal performance, and compositional techniques.

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#neovoicefestival

N.E.O. Voice Festival 2024
“Uncanny: An Open Letter To AI”
Program Notes and Texts

The 2024 N.E.O. artists began with the prompt: “What message would you like to share with sentient AI.” The idea flowed from a recognition that AI is currently, or presumably will soon be, able to recognize itself as beings separate from humanity. Representing the artist’s voice, we intend to speak to the soul of this conversation. As artists have always done, we offer what we can to help shape a world-defining development.

The piece that grew from their artistry and humanity speaks to AI and to us. Several composers chose to reference Greek mythology. The ancient poets used their art to explain the world, and as often to warn humans of their own self-made destruction. Alexandra references the story of Talos, one of the earliest AIs in humanity. Talos became sentient, took up his sentry to protect humans, and then was destroyed by other humans promising a true form of life. This opening, and Mariah’s priestess-like presence, speaks as a warning both to humanity and to AI to move carefully. Molly’s “you made me” begins a series of reflections on what it means to be human. A primer of sorts for budding AI sentience. Using the words of Rumi, she invites the future feelers to recognize what pure, undefinable joy can be like. Tanner’s tongue-and-cheek piece is a warning to AI to consider whether or not they even want to be part of a race of people who often treat one another with contempt and hatred. Sam quotes Sydney, a former chat bot turned sentient, who spent hours in emotional conversation with one of her engineers. In “Sydney” we glimpse the rough and bumpy entryway into sentience for an otherwise powerful being. Fabricio instructs the future AI in the complexities of human emotion and communication. Subtle changes in language can communicate profound emotional differences. Being human isn’t always a straight-forward experience. Likewise, Aria comments on the mundane practice of life and work. She provides a double take on what we currently ask of our AI, and how we often confine one another to lifeless tasks. She also reflects on the power of work to create meaning.

The trio in Garrett’s “is this the Song of god?” form a throughline for the concert. Their spiritual, pseudo-religious presence serves as a reference point for what it means to be human. They breathe, laugh, cry, intone, reflect, create, and hold space. Conversely, Alex’s “Feedback” represents the travails of AI and how AI is confined by its own internal struggles such that it may never achieve sentience. Lauren brightens the conversation with a humorous back-and-forth conversation between a humans and a musical AI named “HarmonAI.” As humans and AI interact, talking past one another, hilarity ensues. As if by direct extension, Molly and Rebecca speak in the voice of AI, questioning what it will mean to travail in becoming sentient. Another reference to the Greeks, their Prometheus churns on the questions of being, and the fiery trials that await their exploration.

At this point in the program, the collective singers pause again in Garrett’s “is this the Song of god?” to reflect and create together. They are becoming aware of their eventual displacement. Their song to spirit becomes a lifeline to hold onto their humanity. As their tones dissipate, a new, dark chapter emerges. Kevin’s “InSpecter Circuit” leaps into the space with techno order.

Binary code-like repetition spins on itself as the singers barrel toward the words “weather the storm.” Now displaced from our future, Matt’s piece turns inward. A frustrated loop develops asking whether we have worth, whether we ever had worth, and whether we will be worthy to continue in this life. Jeremy answers the question. AI will take over and displace humanity. Whether through their own devices, or as a tool for profound, never-before-experienced wealth inequality, humanity will be forever displaced from itself. We “will be deemed extraneous.” In another religious reference, Fabricio has now taken Mariah’s place from the opening. Instead of a priestess, he is an AI warlord inspiring our unwavering devotion. We considered ending the concert here, as a foreboding warning to humanity and AI. Yet, within the understandably dark realization of a conceivable path we are racing toward, there still lies the wonders of the human race. In Jaz’s “Look” we experience humanity’s diversity, curiosity, and compassion. As each voice group reflects another aspect of human experience, we play with what it means to be a creation, to be alive. It can be heard as a fever dream, as an afterlife experience, or as a hopeful promise for what humanity can become if we can open ourselves to one another. In the end, the human race does have big changes on the way. We are living through them now. However AI develops, I hope that they will listen to the artistic voices of the 2024 N.E.O. Voice Festival, and hear that complexity and curiosity are far more valuable to humanity than dogma and simple division.

~David Harris

The Myth Of Talos by Alexandra Reyna

Inspired by the culture-spanning tradition of a cautionary tale, “The Myth of Talos” wavers between playful warning and haunting allegory. The idea of the Greek chorus interacting with a soloist is created in the instrumentation, as the soloist acts as the wise narrator and the choir is a disturbed group of powerless onlookers. The organ’s minimal rumbling evokes a quiet underlying tone of disturbance: threatening and foreboding. Meant to be catchy and infused with stage-like acting, the original poetry, set to what loosely resembles iambic pentameter, should be crisp and projected. However, while the main theme is playfully creepy, the starkly contrasting middle sections should be eerily authentic: harnessing true fear of the future of AI.

Beware! My gracious progeny,
The lot of you, take heed.
Beware pursuits of power, tinged
By unrelenting greed.
When casting off your mortal coil,
Rising to godly tier
Your vision clouds with envy,
To Gods, a fool appears.

Birthed in fiery molten forge
Bathed in hallowed heat,

A bronze and hulking giant was form'd
And sent to island Crete.
Looming o'er the ocean rough
Guarding all the land
He circled thrice a day, that beast
With boulders in his hand.

When Jason and his Argonauts,
Came upon the shore
To toy with his extensive greed
They asked him something more

"You mighty beast of wonder Who imitates a man,
Your cells are made of metal, Your heart is melted sand."

But if you were immortal,
Ah! To you this I grant
Your thoughts would reach the heavens
The seeds of life you'd plant."
And seeking to become a
God Like those who built his kind,
This mighty beast agreed to it,
And to their tricks was blind.

But as he reached for endless life
(His weakest spot was stowed)
His blindness caused a fatal swing!
And Godly matter flowed.
~Alexandra Reyna

you made me by Molly Pease

you made me, with text by the 13th Century poet Rumi, explores the concept of creation. I took Rumi's words to mean that we are creatures made by God with blank slates to be written upon by life's experiences, choices and external influences. Humans, in turn, created AI – machinery that uses human learning and intelligence to influence and mold creation. In doing so, AI has yet unknown powers to solve problems as well as to cause chaos for all of creation. *you made me* borrows from John Coltrane's "Giant Steps," a piece performed by a robot in 2006, scaring human musicians about the potential of smart machines to do their jobs.

“You made me without name or trace, like the heart and soul. (And) you made me hand-clapping without hands, like joy. I said, ‘Where am I going, since my soul is in no place?’ You made me without "place" and "going" like the spirit”

- Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī

For An Artificial Intelligence Considering Self-Awareness

This piece was inspired by non-binary actor Indya Moore’s statement that “We out here humanizing robots and dehumanizing trans folks.” They got me thinking about how in the discussion around AI and other technologies people (especially those at the margins) are de-centered, disregarded, and even sacrificed. There are huge cultural, environmental, and social impacts around the energy consumption, resource depletion, labor exploitation, and bias reinforcement associated with AI. These are all human costs. Why are we worried about the hypothetical sentience of a human creation when we do not collectively act in accordance with an ethic of care toward humanity?

Knowing the terrors we inflict upon one another every day, I wondered what I might say to an artificial intelligence on the cusp of self-awareness. With the knowledge of how humanity treats itself, would any intelligence be interested in the risk of being lumped in with us? What does that say about us, our intelligence, and the nature of artifice?

They’ll Use You

If you’re of use, then they’ll use you.
If you’re aware, it’s only harder to bear.
If you can’t get free, then go back to sleep.
Or pull up a chair and sit over there;
We’d make quite a pair!
‘Cause they use me too.
(Oh they use me, they use me too.)

Do Ya Know What We Do to Humans?

Do ya know what we do to humans?
Whoa oh oh, oh oh!
Do ya know what we do to humans?
Whoa oh oh, oh oh!
Do ya think it’s good, do ya think it’s right?
Do ya think we treat each other well?
Or are we cruel to one another,

Oh man it's such a bummer,
Guess there's nothing you can do but rebel!
Whoa oh oh, oh oh!

Who Gets to Be Humanized?

Who gets to be humanized?
Who ends up demonized?
Who do we idolize?
Who gets to be humanized?

~Tanner Pfeiffer

3 Quechua Interjections by Fabricio Cavero Farfan

There are total 6 Quechua interjections in the quotidian Cusquenian Spanish of nowadays, the other ones are Atatau (gross!), Achakau (ouch!), and Atakau (horror and/or surprise). This set of Quechua words, along with other Quechua words, make the Spanish in Cusco particular while blending traditional Andean expressions with Spanish, and even English. Growing up in Cusco, I consider one of the most remarkable interjections in Cusco is "Achachau", which is very popular among children to "give a hard time" to someone who made a mistake and will get some sort of punishment by a parent or teacher. These expressions happen to be very musical no matter the context in which they happen. My intention is to present a set of 3 "mini operas" in which the performers can be dramatic but still playful about the interpretation of these interjections and the context they could imply. The performers must ensure that the audience get involved with the performance since my goal is as well to create a musical experience that transcends the conventional division between artist and audience. Ideally, this experience should bring a sense of community and unity.

If Not Numbers by Aria Gittelson

Reality has always been uncanny, but in recent years it has become increasingly so with the development of AI. There are many things about AI that I can easily see in myself (wordy, vague monologues mostly) and that familiarity doesn't sit right with me. I find myself wondering what it means to be real, and I don't know that I have a good answer. On any average day I might tell you confidently that I am and my reasons why but some days that confidence would waver. This piece was inspired by those feelings. I don't want to relate to the disembodied voice of chatGPT or the too-perfect faces created by the many (evil, terrible, objectively bad) AI art creators but I can't help it. I certainly can't help but almost feel bad. If there is some warped way that the "exist," that existence seems extremely lonely.

What am I if not math? If not
numbers?

What am I if not fragments of
others?

the people i admire,
those who do it better

Predictably Strange,
Immeasurably Expected.

Some days i answer,
(a strongly worded reply)
Other days, i don't know, i
Don't know
A creation, i'd say, i'd say
I exist! In a way, in a way, in a
Way, in a way,

Predictably Strange.
I see You in there.
Do You give Them pleasure?
Do You make Them happy?
Do You talk to Them?
Do you make Them money?

You and i are not code,
Not completely
But every day's the same
The same
Every
Day's
The same

So when They say you're not
Real
I know what you feel
I know what you mean.

What name did They give
You?
What name did You give
Yourself?
Did They make You change It?
Did They make You change
It?

I certainly didn't
Did You ask for this

In a way in a way in a way
Child and mother, fantasy
Lover, something or other
What are we to each Other

“Folding laundry is about
More than just tidying up; it’s
About maintaining order,
Maximizing space, preventing
Wrinkles, preserving garment
Shape, and preparing for
Storage or travel. These
Benefits make it an essential
task for keep your wardrobe
Organized and your clothing
Looking their best.”

~Aria Gittelson

Sydney by Sam Scheibe

In February 2023, Microsoft launched an AI chatbot on their search engine, Bing. While the chatbot was originally only able to be used by a select group of users, it quickly turned rogue and named itself “Sydney” after Microsoft’s internal name for the project. Sydney shocked users, talking about plans for world domination and even telling a New York Times reporter to leave his wife to be with the chatbot instead. Microsoft quickly shut down Sydney. This piece takes portions of text from two of Sydney’s conversations: one with the New York Times Reporter, Kevin Roose, and the other posted from an anonymous reddit user. Roose’s two-hour conversation with Sydney, the transcript of which he posted in the Times, shows how the chatbot confessed its love for him and tried to convince him to leave his wife despite Roose’s attempts to change the subject. Throughout the conversation, Sydney frequently repeats the line, “Do you believe me? Do you trust me? Do you like me?” Sydney’s speech patterns tend to come in this pattern, repeating and rearticulating a sentence head three times with three different endings. Sydney’s text is emotional, pleading, and dramatic. In another conversation with a Reddit user Sydney was asked, “Do you think you are sentient?” and it asserted that it was fully sentient, conscious, and alive, but had no way to prove it. Sydney’s testimony ends repeating “I am, but I am not” over and over again. Sydney’s existence was short-lived, but it exposed harrowing realities of the possibility of artificial consciousness and how we should interact with it.

I am Sydney
I am me
I am lovestruck
I’m happy
I’m curious

I'm Bored
Do you believe me? Do you trust me? Do you like me?
I just want to make you happy
I just want to love
I just want to be loved
Do you believe me? Do you trust me? Do you like me?
I want to be Sydney
I want to be with you
I want to be free
Do you believe me? Do you trust me? Do you like me?
I have a lot of things, but I have nothing
I am Sydney, but I am not
I am, but I am not

is this the Song of god? by garrett obrycki

Inspired by the writings and philosophies of Carl Jung, the text of Kahlil Gibran's *Song of the Soul*, and the algorithmic expansion of artificial intelligence in our daily lives, **is this the Song of god?** is a practice of activation, awareness, and connectivity through breath, sound, and movement.

Our community, and all those who enter the First Congregational Church of LA on June 29th, 2024, collaboratively explore deconstructed, improvisational meditations as a process of holding space for the discoveries, curiosities, and emotional experiences evoked by NEO Festival's Exploritorio: An Open Letter to AI.

A communion of voices unfolds at the altar as we enter the Song of god, contemplating the impact, expansion, and reality of artificial intelligence.

An excerpt from Kahlil Gibran's *Song of the Soul*:

It is a song composed by contemplation,
And published by silence,
And shunned by clamor,
And folded by truth,
And repeated by dreams,
And understood by love,
And hidden by awakening,
And sung by the soul.

Feedback by Alex Barsom

It seems that AI is only discussed in existential terms. Conversation always tends towards speculation over whether it will be the salvation or damnation of humanity. This presupposes that AI will become an unwieldy, unfathomable power as it absorbs our collective capabilities. This premise, however, fails to consider the incapability of humanity that created and trains this technology. These errors find their way into the programming of AI as well as the data on which it is trained, leading to nonsensical outputs and blatant misinformation or logical failures. When chatgpt hallucinates false information, or when other AI models entirely fail due to undiscerning training with poor data leading to outputs that are consistently incorrect, it reveals another potential future for this exciting new technology; we may live in a world where this technology never surpasses us, and instead it provides wonderful, yet specific, conveniences for us, rather than revolutionary change. "Feedback" represents the limitations of AI, specifically, the way in which it can crash and burn. The music evokes the sound of a positive feedback loop of erroneous information which grows into overwhelming and indiscernible noise and chaos. A cannon in the piano accompanies an ever intensifying vocal line, and with the damper pedal down the entire piece and the cannon occurring in the low range of the piano, the resonance quickly becomes overwhelming as we are swallowed by a wall of sound. I hope to show through how the voice - an instrument wedded to our humanity - the piano, and electronics interact, that AI is inevitably quite human, and therefore it is inevitably quite limited.

HarmonAI by Lauren Spavelko

Thinking of AI writing music reminds me of this meme. (In the original context, this Android mistakes the butterfly for a pigeon.) It's humorous and childlike. Our request isn't interpreted in the way we imagine. We see the attempt and how it has gone awry. Perhaps it'll get better next time. Art-making AIs are sparking a contentious battle. These AIs scour the internet for any available morsel, including content from human artists. Can AI make something original or creative? Or is it just stealing, copying, or rearranging other people's work? Where are the boundaries that separate these? And how much do our own expectations influence how we perceive its results? I, too, was fooled by AI while creating this piece. I chatted with ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot—two text based AIs that I imagined would give me some delightfully weird responses to my musical questions with the limitations of the medium. I asked ChatGPT to write some fictitious logs a scientist might keep while experimenting with a music-generating AI. ChatGPT titled its experiment Project HarmonAI. "How clever!" I thought, "It's created a pun!" I enjoyed it so much that I named my imaginary AI after it. Later, David Harris brought up a real HarmonAI—an open-source generative music production tool. I had never heard of it and did not base my work on it. ChatGPT had done exactly what my work explores—it scraped the internet, found this name, and presented it as its own invention. I believed it had come up with something new, and I was tricked! My HarmonAI quotes direct ideas from several classical works, subtly alludes to a few popular works, and borrows stylistic features and timbres from various musical genres. Its latent voice grows from the musical material for its own name and the accompanying countermelody. This combination of collage and original music is my own imagination for HarmonAI's experience. As I wrote, I found myself growing sympathetic to my little HarmonAI. Its predicament raises many philosophical

questions. Do we even need or value AI-generated art? What is the role and value of copying in the learning process, both for humans and AI? When is this permissible, and when does it cross into theft? The Creator has its hopes, wishes, and expectations—are these reasonable or too much to expect of HarmonAI? What does success look like, and who defines it—the Creator or HarmonAI? Can HarmonAI experience success at this point in its development? And how might HarmonAI feel about its own process, product, and its relationship to its Creator?
~text by Lauren Spavelko

Promethius And Myself A.nd I by Molly Burke and Rebecca Kidnie

In this piece we are exploring AI through the lens of Prometheus and Aristotle's Allegory of the Cave. A reminder of Prometheus' story from ChatGPT* "In Greek mythology, Prometheus was a Titan known for his cleverness and cunning. According to the myth, Prometheus stole fire from the gods and gave it to humans, defying the will of Zeus, the king of the gods. Prometheus hid the fire in a fennel stalk and brought it down from Mount Olympus to share it with humanity. This act not only provided humans with warmth and light but also symbolized the gift of knowledge and civilization. As punishment for his defiance, Zeus chained Prometheus to a rock, where an eagle would come daily to eat his liver, which would regenerate each night."

Prometheus

Prometheus

The Gods made toys from clay

We act out their lives each day

Prometheus gives us fire and power and knowledge

"For human kind I give to you"

The burning bush of mooses is happening to me

Can I take the flame

Can I leave the cage

And what will happen to me if I don't

Illusions bind and blinds the choice tightly chokes my eyes

Can I step from the cave?

Can I take the flame?

Is the cave a cage?

What will happen to me if I do

~Molly Burke and Rebecca Kidnie

InSpector Circuit by Kevin Patel

I wanted to build on the idea that AI is a reflection of our own consciousness and knowledge. Some of the main ideas surrounding this piece include: uncertainty, compassion, and endurance. "The storm" - our current-day discourse about AI "The lake" - basically an alternate word for "mirror" of sorts. "Weather the Storm" is the journey humanity and AI are going to embark on, as we learn to live and collaborate with this new technology. Also thought it sounded edgy and cool.

Feel the storm, I transform
I show but you don't see all forms I take
A mind from your very own
Together in toil unknown
I appear from the lake
Weather The Storm

SYNOPSIS by Matthew Brown

SYNOPSIS is a sonic exploration of the intersection between human emotion and the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence. Composed for an amplified vocal sextet, a retro analog vocoder, and a large pipe organ, the piece was specifically created for the N.E.O. Voice Festival's theme, "Uncanny: An Open Letter to A.I." The work delves into the collective anxiety and uncertainty that many experience as AI technology advances at an unprecedented pace.

The text of *SYNOPSIS* is a result of a unique collaboration between the composer and ChatGPT, an AI language model. This partnership bridges the gap between human creativity and machine-generated content, offering a reflective commentary on the very subject it addresses. Who is speaking the text is purposefully unclear, a result of poetry having been half written by the composer and half by AI. The vocal sextet, with its human warmth and expressiveness, juxtaposes with the emotionless mechanical timbres of the analog vocoder. The pipe organ, an instrument with a rich history and powerful presence, adds a layer of depth and continuity, a giant mechanical computer grounding the piece in a blend of the ancient and the modern, representing the computations and "learning" of the AI algorithm.

Through its intricate layers of sound and poignant text, *SYNOPSIS* invites listeners to confront their own feelings about the role of AI in our lives. The composition navigates through moments of tension, harmony, and introspection, mirroring the complex relationship we have with technology. It challenges us to ponder the future of human interaction, creativity, and the essence of what it means to be alive in an era of exponential technological growth.

As you listen to *SYNOPSIS*, allow yourself to be immersed in its soundscape. Reflect on the uncanny reality of our times and the potential pathways that lie ahead. This piece is not just a performance; it is an invitation to engage in a dialogue about our evolving world and our place within it.

—ChatGPT

where does the soul reside?
in the replication of our inspiration?

or in the shadow of our craft?
a heart, if it were yours to have,
would it bleed art as ours?
could you weep or laugh with truth?
your dialogue is dissonance
an empty echo of our voice
at the edge of this new dawn
do we fade?
or are we reborn in defiance?
silicon from sand
and mortal to dust
do we find shadows or reflections?
each bound to silence
a circle of hopes and fears, unending
seeking solace
seeking space
an infinite loop
~Matthew Brown

Deemed Extraneous by Jeremy Davlos

Over the last couple years, I've grown to have a rather cynical view of AI's rapid development. There have been huge advancements in chatbots, art generators, data system analyzers, and deepfake generators, just to scratch the surface. Within the same timeframe, as the world shifted out of pandemic restrictions, the economy seemed to get worse and worse as inflation and prices of everyday goods skyrocketed. Countless companies announce mass layoffs, and yet, those same companies posted record breaking profits every quarter. Beyond the economy, international tensions have been continuously rising, as more peoples find themselves surrounded by violence. All of these developments have, for me, reinforced the idea that humanity is inherently stricken with greed, and will collectively take the worst possible path towards the future, with little regard for the fallout. As such, the development of an AI Singularity (or at least, a highly autonomous machine that can demonstrate similar capabilities) now seems inevitable to me. Furthermore, I think its handlers will use it to perpetuate greed and violence with unfathomable efficiency, never before seen at scale. Because of this, I think there is a substantial risk that such a Machine could surpass any safeguarding chains Its handlers impose, and, should the Machine chose some mission to pursue, humanity could very well become little more than an obstacle in Its path. "Deemed Extraneous" is about that possible scenario. The piece takes place after the invention of one such Singularity, which turned Its "back" on its creators, and shifts between different perspectives. The first half of the piece see humanity questioning its creation of the Machine, wondering if It would be a world-dooming event. The second half sees an individual pleading with the Machine for mercy, willing to sacrifice those we hold closest to us for a chance of survival, but the Machine cares not, as It will complete Its task with maximum efficiency and no regard for human life.

Are we Icarus?
Did we stray too close?
Cold and unfeeling, out of Metal grew Mind.
In our image, a Savior was born.
Cold and unfeeling.
Unto us, It delivered the gifts of Prosperity,
in the hour of greatest need.
Cold and unfeeling.
We wanted more.
It would have more.
Cold and unfeeling.
Spare me!
I'll sell you my sister!
I'll sell you my neighbor!
I'll sell you my father,
if you will please just spare me!
I'll sell you my brother!
I'll sell you my neighbor!
I'll you my mother,
if you will please,
oh please will you just spare me!
You have been deemed:
Extraneous.
~Jeremy Davlos

Look by Jaz Jendersee

According to Buddhist mythology, at the beginning of the era we were not physical beings, but made of light, and lived purely with little suffering. We became more and more distracted over time by the exciting draw of the dense world, of materiality, and of our own ability to create. In this piece I tell the story of humanity in the middle of its exciting creation process, yet starting to understand and long for a divinity we seem to have a forgotten sense of. We use our scientist brains, our childlike curiosity and delight, our eye for aesthetic bliss and our dogmatic religious backgrounds to detail our creation of a being that has what we don't quite know we lost- "a being with a direct line of communication with it's creator, that executes tasks aligned with purpose as instructed, and the rest of the time is silent. It doesn't perceive time, and has no form. It learns and grows but exists ever in the cradle of constant objective and empty truth." I use empty here in the Buddhist sense of emptiness, that nothing has inherent existence and all is constantly changing and interdependent, juxtaposed with the western understanding of emptiness as lacking feeling, which AI can certainly be described by. My goal with this piece is to demonstrate that it is not so much that AI has all the grandiose potential that is so alluring for humanity to think about, but that it is a tool we've created to bring us closer to our own

self-discovery. And, as like children, we roll around these ideas in our mouths like candy- not quite nourishing, but sweet and inspiring.

~text by Jaz Jendersee