

University of Rome “Tor Vergata”
Department of History, Humanities and Society

Master in Sonic Arts



TOR VERGATA
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI ROMA

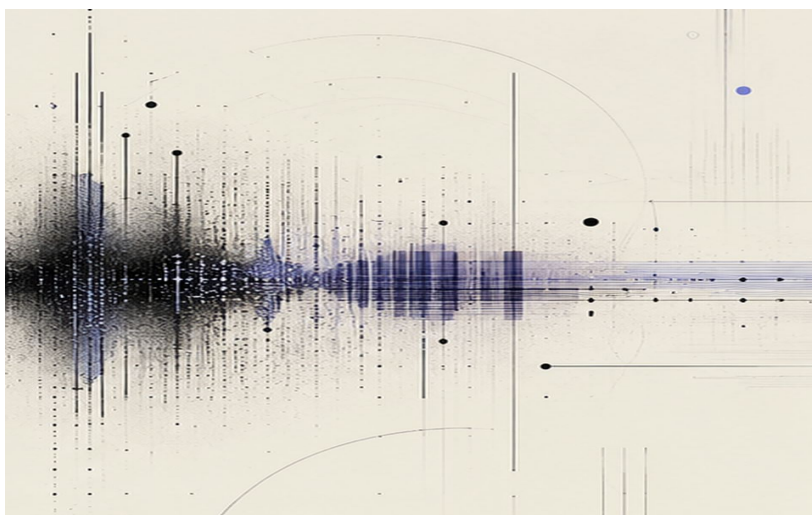


University of Rome
Tor Vergata

Master in
Sonic Arts

“Mixture” Concert Series, 2026 Edition

Concert I : “Augmented Architectures”



23th June 2026, 5.30pm

Auditorium Ennio Morricone

Università di Roma “Tor Vergata”, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, via Columbia 1, Roma

in collaboration with



Musica illuminata



Senhalte Productions

Program

I) Let Me Down; Composer and performer: Pietro Nacca;
Year of Composition and duration: 2022, 3'10'

II) Metonimia; Composer and performer: Simone Sbarzella;
Year of Composition and duration: 2026, 8'

III) Ciò che resta dell'Ombra; Composer: Paolo Gatti;
Performers: Elisabetta Braga (Soprano), Paolo Gatti (Live Electronics);
Year of Composition and duration: 2026, 5' ca.

IV) Solo; Composer: Milena Punzi;
Performer: Milena Punzi (Cello and Live Electronics);
Year of Composition and duration: 2026, 15' ca.

V) Ave Maria (dall'Opera "Otello"); Composer: Giuseppe Verdi;
Performers: Riccardo Balsamo (Piano), Natalia D'Angelo (Soprano);
Year of Composition and duration: 1887, 4' ca.

VI) Vier Quartette op.92 , n. 1, O schöne Nacht; Composer: Johannes Brahms;
Performers: Riccardo Balsamo (Pianoforte), Choir "Petit Chœur" (Director: Riccardo Balsamo);
Year of Composition and duration: 1884, 3' ca.

VII) Insalata Italiana; Composer: Richard Genée;
Performers: Natalia D'Angelo (Soprano), Choir "Petit Chœur" (Director: Riccardo Balsamo);
Year of Composition and duration: 5' ca.

VIII) Bogoroditse Devo, (dai Vespri op.37); Composer: Sergej Rachmaninov;
Performers: Choir "Petit Chœur" (Director: Riccardo Balsamo);
Year of Composition and duration: 1915, 3' ca.

IX) Intermezzo; Composer: Stefano Petrarca;
Performers: Riccardo Balsamo (Piano), Stefano Petrarca (Live Electronics);
Year of Composition and duration: 2025, 5' ca.

Sound Engineer: Gabriele Carone
Technical Assistant: Salvatore Gula

I) Let Me Down

The work originated within an academic context as an exercise in Electroacoustic Composition. It employs a number of fundamental compositional techniques for fixed-media sound processing, based on the montage and editing of a single sound sample taken from a pop song for voice and piano. The project deliberately exaggerates sonic errors and artefacts that may arise through digital audio manipulation, drawing upon the so-called “glitch” aesthetic that emerged during the 1990s. This aesthetic found a theoretical manifesto in Kim Cascone’s essay *The Aesthetics of Failure* and was represented by artists such as Oval, Alva Noto, and Ryoji Ikeda. The form of the piece unfolds through contrasting areas of sonic density and rarefaction. The sound events consist of granular, dust-like agglomerations generated through pitch shifting, dephasing, and time-stretching processes applied to the brief source fragment.

II) Metonimia

Metonimia is an audiovisual composition that investigates the relationship between cause and effect and the consequences generated by the use of familiar terms that have been partially or entirely deprived of their original meaning. Within the contemporary imagination, many such words are acquiring multiple meanings, at times even contradictory ones. These “exchanges of names” constitute the central subject of the work. Through the interaction of geometric forms, images, colours, electronic sounds, and natural and artificial soundscapes, the composition seeks to emphasise the ambiguity of certain representations of contemporary reality. These representations move beyond relationships of logical contiguity and, despite ourselves, produce a distorted narrative of the world. As occurs in metonymy, certain terms gradually enter common usage while the memory of their original meaning is lost. Words such as peace, war, love, and culture are increasingly employed to describe circumstances far removed from their generally accepted or desired meanings, presenting us with a profoundly distorted image of reality.

III) Ciò che resta dell'Ombra

Photography originates in an instant when light strikes a sensitive surface, fixing a trace of what once was. The composition takes shape through the juxtaposition of vocal recordings belonging to different historical, aesthetic, and emotional periods, conceived as genuine sonic fragments. Electronic processing gradually intervenes by superimposing layers, resonances, and distortions that alter their perception, almost creating a shadow that does not signify an absence, but rather a new mode of existence for sound. The original voices do not disappear; instead, they evolve into chiaroscuro memories, eventually dissolving into the surrounding soundscape. The recording thus represents the original light of the sonic event, while electronics generate a zone of shadow that filters and transforms it. What remains is the residual echo of a presence: the memory of light preserved within shadow.

IV) Solo

The solo performance is the outcome of a process of sonic and conceptual research in the field of electroacoustic improvisation. Its approach is exploratory: the cello is continuously expanded, modified, and integrated with electronic elements in order to broaden the territory of sonic manipulation. From the perspective of performance practice, the work also reflects upon the difficult definition of improvisation as an instantaneous act, invoking the concept of *kairos*: qualitative time, the opportune moment, the fleeting instant that must be recognised and seized.

V) Ave Maria (from the Opera “Otello”)

The “Ave Maria” from Giuseppe Verdi’s *Otello* is one of the most intense moments in the opera. Entrusted to the soprano voice, Desdemona’s prayer combines expressive simplicity with profound emotional depth, unfolding within an atmosphere of intimate contemplation that precedes the drama’s tragic conclusion.

VI) Vier Quartette op.92 , n. 1, O schöne Nacht

“O schöne Nacht,” from Johannes Brahms’s *Vier Quartette*, Op. 92, represents one of the highest achievements of the German composer’s secular choral output. Its elegant writing and refined harmonic palette evoke the suspended atmosphere of a summer night, highlighting the softness of the choral sonority and the intimate relationship between music and poetry.

VII) Insalata Italiana

A brilliant concert piece constructed as an entertaining linguistic and musical parody. Through a succession of Italian words, expressions, and stereotypes, the work combines irony, vocal virtuosity, and theatricality, producing a lively and engaging conclusion.

VIII) Bogoroditse Devo, (from Vespri op.37)

In “Bogoroditse Devo,” from *Vespri*, Op. 37, Sergei Rachmaninoff offers one of the most celebrated works of the Russian Orthodox choral tradition. Its radiant melody and intense spirituality merge within a highly evocative musical language, capable of bringing out the full timbral richness of the vocal ensemble.

IX) Intermezzo

The piece begins with highly fragmented phrasing generated through an algorithmic process of proliferation applied to the basic material. Its overall trajectory moves gradually from this rarefied condition towards greater continuity and stasis. The process subsequently leads to a final section in which one of the fragments introduced at the beginning is repeated several times, with micro-variations, in a “minimalist” style. At times, the electronic part reinforces the development of the instrumental writing; at others, it enters into dialogue with the piano, assuming a complementary function. As has become customary in my compositional practice, the work was created using open-source software within a Linux environment. The instrumental designation “for recorded electronic sounds” corresponds to what was once described as “for magnetic tape,” when reel-to-reel tape recorders were still commonly used in concert performance.

Composers and Performers Biographies

Pietro Nacca

Pietro Nacca holds a degree in Electronic Music from the Nicola Sala Conservatory of Music in Benevento, where he studied with Giosuè Grassia and Tonino Battista. He is currently working as a sound technician intern at the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples and previously took part in the Erasmus Internship programme at HAMU, the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, under the guidance of Michal Rataj. He is currently involved in an audiovisual music project with the artist Ameline, also known as Amelie Girodova, with whom he has participated in several international festivals, including VSN in Slovakia, Fête de la Musique in Paris, Music Industry Compass in Antwerp, and Tallinn Music Week. He has released the electronic music EP *The Gohst in the Machine* (2023) and the album *Artifice* (2024) on the Benevento-based label Bulbless! Records. He is currently enrolled in the Master's programme in Sonic Arts and Sound Design for Cinema at the University of Rome Tor Vergata.

Simone Sbarzella

Simone Sbarzella is a pianist, composer of electronic and electroacoustic music, sound engineer, and video artist. Following studies in classical music, piano, and composition, he turned to jazz, performing in numerous clubs, concert series, and festivals. During the same period, he developed a growing interest in recording, audio mixing, and electronic music. He managed Monk Studio, a recording studio, record label, and training centre, where he worked on numerous productions as a sound engineer and sound designer. He later developed a strong interest in cinema, digital video, and video art, with particular attention to the relationship between sound and image, creating a number of audiovisual works. His current artistic practice focuses on electronic and electroacoustic music, video art, and intermedia.

Paolo Gatti

He studied electric guitar, classical guitar, and piano. He holds a degree in Environmental Engineering from the University of Rome Tor Vergata, where he also earned a Master's degree in Sound Engineering. He subsequently graduated with highest honors, obtaining both the First- and Second-Level Academic Diplomas in Electronic Music from the Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome. His compositions have been performed in Italy and abroad, including in the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Mexico, Malta, South Korea, and Thailand, receiving awards and special mentions. His works have been released by various record labels and netlabels. He has composed music for theatre productions, dance performances, and poetry festivals. After receiving a scholarship in 2017, he worked as a composer for Malta's national broadcaster, PBS. In 2024, he was Artist-in-Residence at the MatDot Art Center in Bangkok, Thailand. Over the years, he has also collaborated with universities and AFAM institutions as a teacher and lecturer.

Elisabetta Braga

She holds a Master's degree in Musicology from Sapienza University of Rome and a Diploma in Vocal Performance (Old System and Second-Level Academic Diploma) from the Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome. Her professional activity combines musicological research, artistic production, and teaching. She is actively engaged in musicological research, education, and public outreach, giving lectures and presentations at academic institutions and festivals, including the L. Refice Conservatory, Sapienza University of Rome, the University of Rome Tor Vergata, Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, the Maria Malibran International Music Academy, and the Praeneste Music Academy. She writes program notes and scholarly texts for concert programs and recording projects, including the CD Janáček's Piano Works for Da Vinci Classics, as well as publications for the Accademia Musicale Chigiana and the Istituzione Universitaria dei Concerti (IUC) in Rome. She is also a contributor to *Le Salon Musical*. As a soprano, she performs leading roles from the operatic repertoire of Puccini, Verdi, Mozart, Donizetti, Mascagni, and Leoncavallo, appearing as a soloist in festivals and concert seasons in Italy and abroad. Her recent activities include awards and distinctions, recital performances, chamber music collaborations, participation in international festivals, and involvement in contemporary music projects.

Milena Punzi

A performer whose work moves between contemporary classical music, experimental sound practices, and live visual performance. He earned a Master's degree with honors in Music Composition for Film and Television from the University of Rome Tor Vergata, where he specialized in orchestration, electronic sound design, electroacoustic composition, and music for visual media. His artistic training includes advanced studies in cello performance at the G.F. Ghedini Conservatory in Cuneo and ongoing postgraduate specialization in electroacoustic improvisation at the G.B. Martini Conservatory in Bologna. He has collaborated with artists such as Nicolás Jaar, Mette Henriette, and Johan Lindvall, as well as with the Bigi Paoletti Fritz Company dance ensemble and the Centro Tempo Reale. He has performed at festivals and venues including Nuova Consonanza (Rome), Romaeuropa Festival, Fabbrica Europa, Dark Mofo, Rewire Festival, Nancyphonies, Ljubljana Festival, and Curva Minore. His discography reflects this multifaceted artistic identity, with releases including *Telas* (2021, with Nicolás Jaar), *Conductions – Live at Nuova Consonanza* (2022), *Yugen* (2023), *All'improvviso – An Imaginary Soundtrack* (2024), and *Improvisations for the Land* (2026).

Giuseppe Verdi

Giuseppe Verdi (Roncole di Busseto, 9/10 October 1813 – Milan, 27 January 1901) was the foremost Italian opera composer of the nineteenth century. His masterpieces include *Rigoletto* (1851), *Il trovatore* (1853), *La traviata* (1853), *Don Carlos* (1867), *Aida* (1871), *Otello* (1887), and *Falstaff* (1893). Among his non-operatic works, the celebrated *Messa da Requiem* (1874) holds a particularly prominent place.

Riccardo Balsamo

Riccardo Balsamo is a pianist, harpsichordist, and répétiteur whose work encompasses operatic, chamber, and contemporary repertoire. He collaborates with major musical institutions, including the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, with which he took part in

significant productions in 2025 at the Basilica of Maxentius and the Royal Palace of Caserta. Recognised for his musical sensitivity and versatility, he has worked with internationally renowned artists such as Jennifer Larmore, Eva Mei, Stefania Bonfadelli, and Piero Giuliacci, supporting singers, conductors, and ensembles in both performance and educational contexts. He graduated in Piano with highest honours and specialised in Chamber Music and Harpsichord. Alongside his concert activity, he directs the Petit Chœur and contributes to projects devoted to contemporary music, distinguishing himself through artistic energy, precision, and a strong collaborative spirit.

Natalia D'Angelo

Opera singer, musicologist, and educator. She graduated in Vocal Performance from the Conservatory of Frosinone and in Musicology from Sapienza University of Rome. She has also obtained certifications in music therapy and vocal pedagogy, integrating into her professional activity a particular focus on the educational, expressive, and communicative dimensions of the voice. From an early age, she entered the world of opera as a child chorister at the Rome Opera House. Over the years, she has performed throughout various Italian regions, including Lazio, Sicily, Umbria, and Abruzzo, taking part in both choral and concert activities. Her artistic experience has also extended internationally, particularly in Norway, where she has performed and pursued further training in Oslo and Marmorvegen, attending the Toneheim Folk High School. Alongside her vocal and teaching activities, she has developed a parallel career in music writing and public musicology, contributing to specialized publications such as *L'Ape Musicale* and *Quinte Parallele*. Her work encompasses operatic singing, musicological research, vocal pedagogy, choral practice, and music outreach, guided by a vision of music as an artistic, educational, and deeply human experience.

Johannes Brahms

Johannes Brahms (Hamburg, 7 May 1833 – Vienna, 3 April 1897) was a German composer and pianist of the Romantic period. He wrote symphonies, concertos, chamber music, piano works, choral compositions, and more than two hundred *Lieder*. Brahms was the leading master of symphonic writing and sonata form in the second half of the nineteenth century. He is widely regarded as the principal heir to the Classical tradition of Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Ludwig van Beethoven at a time when that tradition was being questioned or transformed by new Romantic tendencies.

Petit Choeur

Petit Chœur is a vocal ensemble founded in 2025 and composed of singers from a range of musical and choral backgrounds. Established with the aim of promoting choral music through artistic and educational projects, the ensemble devotes particular attention to repertoire for choir and small ensemble. Despite its recent formation, the group has already performed significant works from the choral repertoire, including Martín Palmeri's *Misa a Buenos Aires* (Misatango) with bandoneonist Giampaolo Costantini, Franz Liszt's *Via Crucis* with pianist Giuseppe Rossi, and Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem* in the rare version *d'église*, employing the original instrumental forces conceived by the composer.

Richard Genée

Richard Genée (Danzig, 7 February 1823 – Baden near Vienna, 15 June 1895) was a German composer, conductor, librettist, and translator, regarded as a central figure in the development of Viennese operetta. After receiving his musical education in Berlin, he worked for more than twenty-five years as a theatre conductor in several European cities before moving to Vienna in 1868, where he became principal conductor at the Theater an der Wien. The author of more than thirty operettas and comic operas, he collaborated closely with Johann Strauss II, Franz von Suppé, and Carl Millöcker. He wrote over sixty libretti and made a decisive contribution to the creation of celebrated operettas such as *Die Fledermaus*, becoming one of the leading figures of the golden age of Viennese operetta.

Sergej Rachmaninov

Sergei Rachmaninoff (Oneg, near Semyonovo, 1 April 1873 – Beverly Hills, 28 March 1943) was a Russian composer, pianist, and conductor, widely regarded as the last major representative of the Russian Romantic tradition and one of the greatest piano virtuosos of his time. He is particularly celebrated for his piano concertos and for the renowned *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* (1934) for piano and orchestra.

Stefano Petrarca

Stefano Petrarca studied piano, composition, trumpet, guitar, Electronic Music, Mathematics, and Computer Science. He is the author of works for chamber ensembles, solo instruments, magnetic tape, and real-time synthesizers, which have been performed in concerts and radio broadcasts. From 2001 to 2011, he taught Music Informatics and Mathematics at the Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome. From 2015 to 2017, he taught Electroacoustics and Models for the Analysis and Digital Processing of Sound at the F. Morlacchi Conservatory in Perugia. He is the author of the book *Matematica per la Musica e il Suono*, published by Aracne. Several of his compositions have been released by the Senhalte record label.

“Mixture” Concert Series, 2026 Edition

This year once again, the Mixture Concerts reaffirm their vocation as an open space for encounters between musical languages, artistic practices, and multimedia perspectives. The title itself evokes the idea of interweaving and cross-pollination: a laboratory of research and listening, a place where diverse forms of contemporaneity can converge, giving rise to expressive paths that are both heterogeneous and complementary. This year's edition is structured around two distinct yet closely interconnected events. The first, entitled Augmented Architectures, explores the relationship between instrumental music, vocality, choral expression, multimedia practices, and electroacoustic processing, placing the voice at the center as an expressive matrix that unites human gesture and instrumental action. Through digital technologies, the voice expands, evolves, and transforms, generating new forms of presence, interaction, and expression. The second event, entitled Ancient Resonances, Spaces in Metamorphosis, investigates space as a site of memory, perception, and sonic imagination. Through a dialogue between early music repertoires and contemporary electroacoustic practices, the concert offers an immersive listening experience in which past and present intertwine, generating new forms of resonance, listening, and meaning.