

Name of host(s)
Michael Schumacher
Name of event: *Living Room Music*

City: Brooklyn, NYC

How many speakers will be available? What is the configuration?

50 Speaker Surround Sound and Immersive Playback Space with variable ITU standard layouts (5.1, 7.1, 22.2, Dolby Atmos/Objects, etc.)

If your specified sound system is not typical (i.e. laptop or smartphone with Bluetooth speaker, 5.1 home cinema system, stereo system, radio), it should be exactly described in the "Other information the host should know" space on the submission form.

How many channels?

Up to 50 plus up to 4 subwoofers

Single or multiple mono sources, or an ambisonic system. Interactive aspects, such as responses to voice commands, are also feasible.

What are the performance space approximate dimensions?

1000 sq. ft.

The space will be set up as a minimal living space, with comfortable chairs.

Must a programmed composer attend?

no

Max length

n/a

Will event be documented?

Yes, any generative piece will be recorded as it plays. There will be some video documentation of audience interactions with the pieces.

Date

Wednesday, March 13, time TBA

When will the rehearsals take place?

Full dress day of

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CONCEPT and SPACE:

The presentation will take place in the audio room at NYU's MARL space at 370 Jay St. It will take the form of an installation repeated over the course of about 3-4 hours, depending on the number and length of accepted submissions.

The Call seeks works that re-imagine the living space as a place for listening with its own, unique characteristics. Submissions should take into account the activities people engage in at home,

the kind of sound systems used (real or imagined), interactivity, ambient sound and other factors. The structure of the submitted work should engage these realities, working with but also challenging them.

Background:

In the 1960s and 70s, the boom in “Hifi” meant every middle-class home had a good stereo system, usually located in the living room. LPs engaged the hifi consumer as a token of the concert experience, a take-home substitute for being there. Its duration, about 20 minutes a side, worked well, not too long or short. The listening chair was a feature, positioned in an ideal spot between two well-placed loudspeakers.

The transposition of concert music to this format was relatively easy as recording quality improved and studio techniques developed. Popular music also responded to the ubiquity of home stereos (and FM radio), with a move towards more complex structures and “concept albums”. Then the CD happened, then MP3s, and “everything changed”. Music listening became a background to life, an always-on phenomenon that tinged the day’s emotional ride. Hifi all but disappeared, replaced by iPods, earbuds and Bluetooth speakers.

The Call in more detail:

This call asks composers to consider and engage the contemporary reality of at-home listening, its distractions, the widely variable quality of playback systems, and the potential for interactivity through systems ranging from “Alexa” to AI. Works may blend into and subtly alter this setting, or aggressively challenge it, and anything in between.

We are not looking for submissions that attempt to transfer the concert experience to the home, whether that originates in traditional halls, art galleries, or specialized spaces such as the “BEAST”. The essential question we are asking is “what is (are) the nature(s) of listening at home, and how can contemporary electro-acoustic music address that?”

Things to consider might be these:

- what other, ambient sounds might typically exist?
- what other activities (besides listening), might people be engaged in?
- what role might silence play in the structure of the work?
- what sort of social events, besides the quotidian, might occur?
- what formal aspects work best in a situation where listening may be an accompaniment to other activities, etc?

Coordinated Call for Papers:

Additionally, we are welcoming submissions of musicological papers on the same topic. There will be a post-presentation conversation discussing the issues surrounding home listening and the distribution of contemporary electro-acoustic music in general.