Electronic Composition Program
Electronic Composition Students
Prepare for Careers on the Cutting Edge

Bonnie co-wrote and staged a successful and innovative multimedia opera. Rene owns a successful music production studio where he writes and produces commercial music. John and Sun-Young compose music for commercial videogames. Mike has composed countless scores for television and film. Joe composed a children’s musical that was recently accepted for ninety performances through the Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera. What do they all have in common? They are graduates of the Electronic Composition track in the School of Music’s Music Technology degree program.

“I think the program is a really great opportunity. There isn’t anything like it,” said Lynn Emberg Purse, area chair of Electronic Composition. “It’s a degree, grounded in musicianship, and there’s also a technology component. Our students leave with great skills that help them to find their way in the highly competitive world of music.”

Both the undergraduate and graduate program emphasize the development of both traditional and contemporary compositional techniques, as well as skills in computer score notation and production for video, film and live productions. The state-of-the-art technology studios at the School of Music support advanced music and multimedia production that allow student composers to create and produce a robust portfolio of their work.

Student composers have many opportunities through the program to have their pieces performed publicly. Student ensembles and recitals provide opportunity for composers to have their pieces heard. In addition, students stage full composition recitals where they must find performers, prepare notation, run rehearsals and publicize the event.

“The music world is beginning to open up, and our students really have an opportunity to take advantage of that,” said Purse. “It’s a great time for them.”

Ted Kocher, (B.M. Music Technology, 2008) is a music editor for Sony Computer Entertainment in San Mateo, CA. Sony is widely recognized as the industry leader in interactive music and audio and, in August, opened a new recording complex with 17 new edit Pods, an API control room, a live room that accommodates 35 musicians and a Euphonix S5 mixing stage.

Since his Sony debut in 2009, Kocher has earned numerous credits for his contributions to interactive music. His most impressive credit thus far is for his work as a music editor for the PS3 title Journey, the first video game soundtrack to be nominated for a GRAMMY Award.

As a music editor, Kocher is one of a diverse 17-member team of engineers, composers, music producers and music implementation experts. In addition to his work on titles such as Journey and The Unfinished Swan, he has performed as a session musician on both trumpet and keyboard. Kocher also called upon his prior experience as an amateur baseball player to be the voice of the umpire in Sony’s San Diego studio’s MLB: The Show.

When project deadlines are closing in, the days are long and the work is intense, but the experience of working on challenging projects for a top-quality organization is immensely rewarding.

Kocher’s Sony career began with an internship as he completed his music degree at Duquesne. At the start of the internship, he was informed that corporate policy was, “We do not hire interns, so don’t get your hopes up.” Upon completion, he returned to Pittsburgh and began working in musical instrument sales. Several months later, he received a phone call with a job offer from Sony at its San Diego office. Five years later, he has moved north to Sony’s top studio in San Mateo, where he is working on a broad range of projects to prepare for the release of Playstation 4 and beyond.