

# Taking microtonal composition and performance from the periphery into the mainstream

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This workshop seeks to bring some technical and expressive aspects of microtonal singing from experimental approaches (e.g. those represented by the music of Harry Partch) into mainstream vocal performance. *Sacred Songbook* is a collection of “lieder” by the first author, set to texts of Abrahamic (Christian, Jewish, Islamic) provenance, using the microtonal scale with 19 equal steps to the octave. The third author will demonstrate (live) the preparation for performance of selections, using machine-assisted rehearsal, performance, measurement, and analysis techniques developed by the second author. The workshop will showcase: (1) machine-assisted practice techniques, (2) score-based versus aural-based rehearsing techniques and feedback, (3) post facto empirical (machine-based) measurement, analysis, and interpretation, (4) use of techniques of microtonal melodic ornamentation and gesture to blend expressive and technical means, and (5) the relationship between the meaning, character, and aesthetic qualities of the texts and the musical expression and structure of the performance. The workshop draws on a number of sources from experimental composition and performance traditions, and harnesses, develops, and extends them to invigorate mainstream approaches to vocal performance and to achieve performances that reflect something of the ecstatic mysticism of texts from the different traditions represented in the *Sacred Songbook*.

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