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Translation: Music (digital, that is) at GSU PAC on Wednesday

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GEORGIA SOUTHERN'S MUSIC DEPARTMENT has presented a wide variety of music in decades of concerts – but there's been one type conspicuously absent.

Hip-hop.

It's no surprise music that fits on a Kanye West album wouldn't necessarily be rubbing shoulders with Bach and Beethoven, but students will get a chance to show their chops with some modern music at a concert next Wednesday at 8 p.m. at Georgia Southern University's Performing Arts Center, when the GSU music department will present its second annual concert of digital and electronic music.

The concert is free and open to the public, and will feature music composed by students as well as pieces performed by faculty in two sections – one for recorded music, and another for live performances.

The first half of the concert is pieces made by students in the music

department's music technology class.

"The good thing about this concert that's different from other concerts is that I'm about the only one around here that does popular music," said Richard Repp, who teaches music technology at GSU.

"There's some pretty heavy rock songs on there, and some real hip-hop music on there, too."

Listeners would be hard-pressed to find modern music that isn't digital. From "virtual" instruments that exist solely in a computer and create entire arrangements to the sweetening of orchestra recordings by adding some simulated strings, computers, both inside instruments and in and of themselves, have changed the face of music.

Most composers use computers in one way or another, Repp said, from just using a program to create sheet music or producing entire, finished arrangements digitally.

Teaching and performing modern popular music can be controversial in music departments, Repp said, since traditionally music departments focus on more "serious" music.

"We certainly aren't teaching people to sing hip hop in their voice classes, but we should have some avenue for people who want to do that," he said.

Classical music is still important, however, and music departments provide some of the strongest support for it, Repp said – he himself has performed in professional operas.

Creating electronic pieces, whether abstract pieces or pop, is a different type of work than sitting down and penning a piece, practicing it



MICHELLE BOAEN/staff

One of the pieces on Wednesday's electronic music concert will feature digital percussion, controlled by the module pictured.

and performing it for traditional instruments.

"The difference is, with what we're doing everything is happening virtually – everything's happening within the computer, and then you produce the music digitally," Repp said.

Those "virtual" instruments exist entirely within a computer, and are both recreations of traditional instruments and entirely new ways to produce sound.

GSU junior Kristopher Martenn, a music composition major who has two pieces in the concert, said putting together music entirely in a computer is very different from writing out a piece for instruments to perform.

"I sat down, I found some cool sounds, I did a little improvisation thing," he said.

Martenn said he likes electronic music because it's something fun for him and a composing experience different than traditional music courses.

The electronic music class isn't limited strictly to music majors. One of the artists performing on the concert, Brandon Ficklin, is a non-music major, and will be performing a rap piece live on-stage at the concert.

"I think he may be the first person ever to rap at Georgia Southern in the music department," Repp said.

Most students who come into the GSU music department tend towards more tonal and concrete music, rather than abstract pieces (think Stephen Sondheim versus John Cage), Repp said. Part of that is due to exposure – students can hear

plenty of music on the radio using computers that sounds perfectly normal, but not many get a chance to hear experimental electronic pieces.

"Here, we tend to have a more traditional style than composing at some other schools," he said.

Violinist Jonathan Aceto will be performing an abstract piece, Priscilla McLean's "Desert Voices" on the Wednesday concert.

Electronic music isn't necessarily the wave of the future, Repp said.

"It's the present, rather than the future," he said. "Classical music will always tend to be acoustic."

Also, live music is always more interesting when actual performers are involved, he explained, which is one impetus behind having live performers with electronic instruments on the second half of Wednesday's show.

One piece, Andrew Lloyd Webber's overture from "Jesus Christ Superstar," will feature drummer Paul Czech on a digital kit, pianist Michael Braz on keyboards and Repp on a guitar synthesizer.

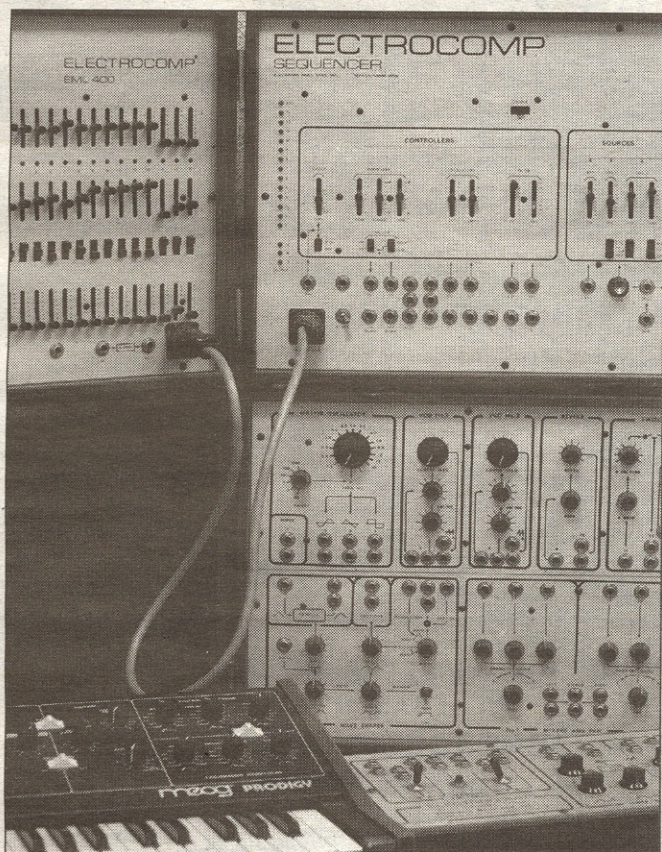
Annual Electronic Music Concert

What: Electronic and digital music composed and performed by GSU students and faculty.

Where: GSU Performing Arts Center.

When: Wednesday, Feb. 22 at 8 p.m.

Admission: Free.



An Electrocomp analog synthesizer sits in Georgia Southern's Electronic/Digital Music Studio.