THOMAS ADAM BILLINGS - Curriculum Vitae

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EDUCATION

Doctor of Musical Arts – Composition & Music Theory
Boston University, College of Fine Arts – Boston, Massachusetts
Primary advisors: Richard Cornell, Joshua Fineberg, Ketty Nez

Pi Kappa Lambda International Honors Society Member, 2025
Departmental Honors in Composition and Music Theory, 2025
Dissertation: *Vivaria* for sinfonietta and electronics

Master of Music – Music Composition
The New School, Mannes School of Music – New York, NY
Primary advisors: Timo Andres, Levy Lorenzo, David T. Little

Graduate Minor in Social-Impact Entrepreneurship
Finalist for Mannes Music Theory Award
62 Master's credits (only 36 required for degree)

Bachelor of Music – Composition
The Juilliard School – New York, New York

George Gershwin Scholarship Recipient
Marvin Hamlisch Scholarship Recipient

SUMMARY

College Courses Taught

Ear Training I, II, III, IV • Music Theory II, III, IV • Keyboard Harmony I, II, III, IV
Introduction to Music • Blues to Hip-Hop: America's Music • Creativity and Innovation

Secondary Courses Taught

Music Technology • Advanced Recording Arts • Music Production • Songwriting • Music Appreciation • Music Theory

Curriculum Development and College Teaching: College teaching since 2022 across music theory, aural skills, keyboard harmony, and interdisciplinary music studies. Designed the complete four-semester Ear Training I–IV curriculum at William Paterson University, integrating sight singing, dictation, aural identification, and practical musicianship through an approach grounded in listening and perception. Served as Composer-in-Residence at Western Washington University, presenting lectures and teaching undergraduate and graduate composition lessons.

Accessible Teaching and Cultural Context: Develops original courses connecting musical practice with aesthetics, cultural history, and artistic innovation. Uses guided listening, creative and analytical projects, and individualized feedback to support students with varied musical preparation. Experience includes personalized music technology and production instruction for neurodivergent and gifted secondary students.

Electronic Musical Instrument Design: Founder of Terraphones, developing original electronic instruments through sound synthesis, embedded digital signal processing, firmware development, and interface design. Technical practice includes Max/MSP, Pure Data, embedded C++, and sensor-based control, with structured performer testing guiding successive prototypes. Presented instruments and led hands-on demonstrations at Buchla & Friends in 2026. Developing modular teaching materials connecting instrument design, programming, and performance.

Composition and Interactive Media: Creative work spans acoustic composition, live electronics, and custom instruments, including *Vivaria* for sinfonietta and electronics and *SAMA* for saxophone, gyroscopic ring, and Max/MSP. Works performed or recorded by Mivos Quartet, Irvine Arditti, and Sound Icon. Co-founded Mannes "nstrumentlab" and developed audience-phone sound-distribution technology for Nathan Davis's work at the University of Chicago's Rockefeller Carillon New Music Festival.

Audio Production and Concert Development: Managed audio/video recording, editing, and mastering for all Mannes composition-department events. Co-developed the "Tech Forward" showcase for student electronic music and organized and produced Boston University's Doctoral Composers Concert. Experience connects experimental music technology with recording workflows, live presentation, and collaborative concert production.

Programming and Software: Proficient in the following programs and languages: Pro Tools, Logic Pro, Ableton Live, Reaper, BandLab/SoundTrap, Melodyne, iZotope suite, MaxMSP, Pure Data, Arduino/Teensy IDE, embedded C/C++, HTML, CSS, Javascript.

EXPERIENCE

Visiting Assistant Professor – St. Thomas Aquinas College | September 2026 - Present

Courses: Introduction to Music, Blues to Hip-Hop: America's Music

- Serve as instructor of record for three undergraduate course sections enrolling approximately 90 students, with responsibility for curriculum development, instruction, and assessment.
- Redesign Introduction to Music as a hybrid course integrating in-person instruction with original asynchronous modules in music fundamentals, history, and critical listening.
- Develop an original Blues to Hip-Hop curriculum examining American music through guided listening, cultural analysis, historical research, and full-album study.
- Design student-responsive curricula for non-music majors, employing active listening, discussion-based instruction, and analytical projects supported by original instructional materials.

Adjunct Professor – William Paterson University | September 2025 - Present

Courses: Ear Training I, II, III, and IV, Music Theory II, and III, Creativity and Innovation

- Teach three undergraduate courses per semester across music theory, aural skills, and interdisciplinary general education.
- Design and implement a comprehensive four-semester ear-training curriculum integrating sight singing, dictation, aural identification, audiation, and applied musicianship.
- Develop a phenomenological approach to aural-skills instruction that connects perceptual experience and descriptive listening with theoretical understanding, incorporating differentiated instruction for students with varying musical backgrounds.
- Teach Creativity and Innovation through interdisciplinary study of music, aesthetics, and cultural change, emphasizing critical discussion, aesthetic interpretation, and research-based projects.

Founder – Terraphones | June 2025 – Present | www.terraphones.com

Boutique electronic instrument company developing expressive, performance-first instruments that integrate contemporary synthesis, embedded systems, and interface design grounded in practical musicianship.

Research and Product Development

- Develops original musical interfaces from concept through production, integrating embedded DSP and sound-engine development (C++, Max/MSP, PureData) with real-time microcontroller firmware (Electrosmith Daisy Seed, Seeed Studio XIAO RP2040).
- Build all firmware and sound engines from scratch, focusing on advanced synthesis approaches, control mapping, and playability-driven parameter design for live performance.
- Uses an iterative prototyping methodology: rapid hardware and firmware revisions informed by structured performer play-tests, semi-structured feedback sessions, and repeat evaluation across multiple builds to improve learnability, reliability, and expressive range.
- Designs and fabricate custom enclosures using 3D modeling (Shapr3D), with production constraints, assembly workflow, and durability in mind.
- Leads visual and narrative branding, including web development and UX/UI design, positioning each instrument as a compositional tool, music education tool, and art object.

Documentation, Teaching Translation, and Professional Pipeline

- Develops internal documentation that translates the full workflow into modular build units suitable for coursework (sensors and embedded control, DSP and mapping, enclosure design, testing, and performance documentation), scalable from introductory projects through capstone prototypes.
- Applies a product-development pipeline aligned with industry practice: design requirements, revision tracking, QA and test procedures, manufacturing constraints, and end-user documentation suitable for portfolio-ready student outcomes.

Outcomes and Recognition

- Opened for pre-orders on 1/1/26, generating $50,000 in revenue within 24 hours of opening.
- Featured in online publications including Synth Anatomy, MatrixSynth, Sonicstate, and Synthtopia.
- Invited to present as an exhibitor at Buchla & Friends (January 2026).
- Instruments purchased by prominent musicians including Donald Glover (Childish Gambino), Hudson Mohawke, and Galen Tipton.
- Designed an operational business model centered on sustainable small-batch production.

Instructor of Aural Skills and Keyboard Harmony – Boston University | August 2022 - May 2025

Courses: Aural Skills III and IV, Keyboard Harmony I, II, III, IV

- Delivered advanced sophomore-level Aural Skills instruction three times weekly, guiding students through rigorous sight-singing, dictation, and solmization exercises based on Gary Karpinski's Manual for Ear Training and Sight Singing.
- Developed custom assignments, created original musical excerpts and tailored activities to reinforce complex theoretical concepts.
- Established a strong reputation for clearly articulating sophisticated musical principles, enhancing student comprehension and mastery.
- Taught multiple undergraduate sections of Keyboard Harmony, emphasized voice-leading, figured-bass realization, harmonization of chorale harmonization, and practical transposition techniques.
- Designed comprehensive examinations aligning precisely with the Music Theory curriculum outcomes, enabling students to effectively demonstrate theoretical proficiency and keyboard competency.
- Provided focused instruction in score-reading techniques, clef literacy, and advanced harmonic progression performance at the piano.

Graduate Music Theory Tutor – Boston University | August 2023 - May 2025

- Provided targeted, high-level tutoring for undergraduate and graduate students at Boston University's School of Music, specializing in complex analytical topics including sonata form, harmonic analysis, voice-leading, and post-tonal theory.
- Developed customized tutoring sessions employing diverse pedagogical methodologies to effectively address varied learning styles.
- Significantly contributed to the academic success of eight doctoral students passing rigorous Doctoral Qualifying Exams.

Music Teacher & Director of Student Bands – Fusion Academy - Newton, MA | July 2022 - June 2025

Courses: Music Technology, Advanced Recording Arts, Songwriting, Music Production, Music Appreciation, Music Theory

- Solely managed all music instruction and program enrichment at Fusion Academy Newton, catering specifically to neurodivergent and gifted high school students in personalized, one-on-one teaching settings.
- Designed and implemented individualized curricula across diverse music disciplines, including Music Technology, Songwriting, Music Theory, Music Appreciation, and instrumental lessons in Piano, Guitar, Drums, and Vocal Fundamentals.
- Led and coached two student rock bands, conducting weekly rehearsals and arranging customized repertoire based on student interests, creating accessible lead sheets, chord charts, tablature, and sheet music.
- Taught ensemble skills, active listening, collaboration, and improvisational techniques tailored to students' abilities and musical objectives.
- Successfully implemented instructional strategies to meet the diverse cognitive profiles and creative strengths of neurodiverse learners.

Co-Founder: Mannes nstrumentlab – The New School - New York, NY | September 2020 - May 2022

- A program created by myself with assistance and funding by Prof. Levy Lorenzo and the Creative Technology department at Mannes.
- Developed original touch-interactive musical web applications utilizing the Web Audio API in conjunction with Javascript.
- Created multiple instrument apps and programs that could run on a web browser, including keyharp, ambio, bird, and chime.
- Promotion and marketed Music Technology concerts, organized social engagements, master classes, and educational gallery exhibitions.
- Created a web-based platform for wireless sound and data transfer from a host computer to a large number of speakers on audience members' mobile devices. Developed the live, mobile sound-dispersion technology for Nathan Davis' composition for the Rockefeller Carillon New Music Festival at the University of Chicago.

Graduate Department Assistant, Composition – Mannes College of Music - New York, NY | September 2021 - May 2022

- Created, developed, and maintained an original social media network connecting student composers and performers.
- Singlehandedly Managed Audio/Video recording, editing, and mastering for all department events.
- Managed submission forms for multiple department events.
- Created programs for student concerts. Designed marketing materials for the composition department.

Web Designer and Front-End Developer – gabrielkahane.com | August 21, 2025 Public Launch

- Sole designer and developer, responsible for UX, UI, visual identity, and custom iconography, working directly with the artist.
- Built a static, desktop-first site with a five-section navigation and responsive grid; established Neutra and Minion typography via local font-face, with Typekit on editorial pages.
- Implemented a custom tour calendar using Google Sheets and the Google Visualization API, and integrated the Substack feed; designed Discography (Wax) and Works catalogs with structured content and deep links.
- DreamHost static hosting with manual control-panel releases and image optimization; ongoing maintenance on retainer.
- The site received approximately 6,000 views on day one after launch.

PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Boston University Chamber Orchestra (2024): Recording of *Texture Sketches* at Boston University's Concert Hall

Sound Icon Ensemble (2023): Recording of *Kynesia* at Boston University's Concert Hall

Irvine Arditti (2023): Recording of *impression* at Salon Brahms – Vienna, Austria

Mivos Quartet (2023): Performance of *Mycelia* at Mozarthaus – Vienna, Austria

rioT Trio: Performance of *Filigree*, and *Arcadia* at Sacred Heart Parish – Newton, MA | April 2023. Performance of *Filigree* at Western Washington University's Concert Hall – Bellingham, WA | October 2022

Western Washington University College of Fine Arts

- Composer-in-Residence for Composition department – Bellingham, WA | October 2022
- Commissioned by Music department to compose *Filigree* for reed trio | September 2022
- Commissioned by Music department to compose *Modular Miniatures for Pandemic Performance* | October 2020

Mannes American Composers Ensemble (2022): Recording of *LAST OASIS* at The New School's Glassbox Theater

Mannes nstrumentlab (2021–): Original electronic instrument research group founded in partnership with Prof. Levy Lorenzo

Bellingham Chamber Music Society (2021): Commissioned to arrange the movements of *Musica Ricercata* by Gyorgi Ligeti

Bellingham Festival of Music (2019): *Welcome Home Concert* - Full-length concert of my music

COMPOSITIONS AND PROJECTS (click on title to watch performance/score-follow video on YouTube)

Electronic Music

what we don't say... (2025) - Nymira Terraphone

- Performed in Blauvelt State Park, NY | November 2025

Ambient Works (Part One and Two) (2025) - modular synthesizer

- An album of forty ambient pieces composed during the 2020 pandemic.

Athyria (2022) - custom electronic instrument

- A three-voice, granular synthesizer and live delay instrument. All aspects are original concepts created by myself.

SAMA (2022) - alto saxophone, gyroscopic ring, MaxMSP

- Performed at the Glassbox Theater at Mannes School of Music – New York, NY | February 2022

Eclipse Ritual (2021) - custom photocell drone instrument

- Performed at the Glassbox Theater at Mannes School of Music – New York, NY | December 2021

Lament (2021) - alto saxophone, MaxMSP

- Recorded for the Creative Music Technology department at Mannes School of Music – New York, NY | February 2021

Spring Mosaic (2021) - MaxMSP, TouchOSC

- Recorded for the Creative Music Technology department at Mannes School of Music – New York, NY | April 2021

Comfort EP (2021) - modular synthesizer

- Two pieces composed for modular synthesizer.

they & i (2019) - flute, clarinet, bassoon, viola, electronics

- Performed by students of The Juilliard School for the Composers and Choreographers Showcase – New York, NY | (December 2019)

Acoustic Music

Osmia (2026) - oboe, clarinet, bassoon

- Performed by the Bellingham Chamber Music Society at Hotel Leo – Bellingham, WA | February 2026

Vivaria (2025) - sinfonietta and electronics (dissertation score)

- Performed by students of Boston University at Questrom Auditorium – Boston, MA | May 2025

Aleutia (2024) - string quartet

- Performed by students of Boston University at Questrom Auditorium – Boston, MA | May 2025

Kalei (2024) - oboe, clarinet, alto saxophone, bassoon, bass clarinet

- Performed by students of Boston University at Questrom Auditorium – Boston, MA | May 2025

Kalygraphea (2023) - **flute, clarinet, violin, cello**
- Performed by students of Boston University at Questrom Auditorium – Boston, MA | May 2025
- Recorded by graduate students of Boston Conservatory, Harvard and Boston University – Boston, MA | December 2023

Kynesia (2023) - **flute, clarinet, soprano/baritone saxophone, trombone, percussion, violin, viola, cello, bass**
- Recorded by Sound Icon at Boston University's Concert Hall | November 12, 2023

Arcadia (2023) - **oboe, clarinet, bassoon, violin, viola, cello**
- Commissioned by Western Washington University. Recorded by Bellingham Chamber Music Society | August, 2023
- Performed by Bellingham Chamber Music Society | October 2023
- Premiered by rioT Trio and Boston University students at Sacred Heart Parish in Newton, MA | April, 2023

Mycelia (2023) - **string quartet**
- Performed at the Vienna Summer Music Festival by Mivos Quartet – Vienna, Austria | July, 2023
- Premiered by Boston University students at Sacred Heart Parish – Newton, MA | April, 2023

Hanging, Suspended (2023) - **alto saxophone, piano**
- Premiered at the Iceberg Institute by Joel Diegert and Alfredo Ovalles – Vienna, Austria| July 2023

LAST OASIS (2022) - **1.1.1.1. 1.1.1.0. 2perc, harp, 1.1.1.1.1.**
- Recorded by the Mannes American Composers Ensemble in the the Glassbox Theater, Mannes College of Music | April 2022

bloom (2021) - **flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, cello**
- Premiered by students of The Mannes College of Music at the Glassbox Theater, Mannes College of Music | November 2021

impromptu for birds (2020) - **flute, oboe, clarinet, viola, bassoon, piano**
- Premiered by music faculty members of Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington | August 2020

"meditation" (2019) - **string quartet, e-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, crotales, xylophone**
- Premiered by students of The Juilliard School at Morse Recital Hall, The Juilliard School | May 2019

poem (2019) - **solo piano**
- Premiered by Henry Smolen at C. Michael Paul Hall, The Juilliard School | January 2019
- Performed by Adam Sherkin at the Glassbox Theater, Mannes College of Music | March 2022

Notable Performances

Thomas Adam Billings - DMA Recital No. 2 – Boston, MA | 2025
- A self-prepared, evening-length recital of music I composed while in residence at Boston University. The program consisted of *Kalei, Aleutia, Kalygraphea,* and the presentation of my dissertation composition: *Vivaria.*

Boston University Doctoral Composers Concert – Boston, MA | 2023
- A concert which I created, organized, and produced, showcasing works by each of the doctoral composers at Boston University. My piece, *Kalygraphea*, was premiered.

Thomas Adam Billings - **DMA Recital No. 1** – Newton, MA | 2023
- A self-prepared, evening-length recital. rioT Trio, a faculty ensemble from Western Washington University received a grant to fly to Massachusetts as featured guest performers on this recital. The program consisted of *Filigree, Dame la mano, interlude, Mycelia, Arcadia.*

International Double Reed Society Conference (IDRS), Fifth Inversion Wind Quintet – Boulder, CO | 2022
- A recital given by Fifth Inversion Wind Quintet featuring five movements I had arranged for wind quintet from Ligeti's Musica Ricercata on commission by Fifth Inversion Wind Quintet. University of Colorado - Boulder.

Mannes Inaugural "Tech Forward" Showcase – New York, NY | 2021
- A new concert series developed by Prof. Levy Lorenzo and I to showcase student-created electronic music projects. This showcase also paved the way for the *nstrumentlab* project which I created with Prof. Lorenzo.

Modular Miniatures for Pandemic Performance, featuring the music of Adam Billings – Bellingham, WA | 2021
- Produced by the Western Washington University Department of Music. Culminated in a virtual concert of various student woodwind trios playing music in my collection: *Modular Miniatures for Pandemic Performance.* Music was composed in a way that allowed for asynchronous and virtual performance over video-calling software.

Welcome Home Concert - Adam Billings – Bellingham, WA | 2019
- Produced by the Bellingham Festival of Music. A full-length concert of my music. Performers consisted of professional musicians from

the Pacific Northwest, students from the Juilliard School, and Western Washington University.

Residencies and Festivals

Buchla & Friends Synthmaker Showcase – Los Angeles, CA | January 2026
- Presented *Nymira* and *Aurelia* at Buchla & Friends: a yearly gathering of synthesizer manufacturers and enthusiasts in LA, CA.
- Provided hands-on demonstrations and tutorials for my instruments
- Performed improvised works on *Aurelia*.

Composer in Residence - **Western Washington University** – Bellingham, WA | October 2022
- Invited by the Western Washington University Composition Department
- Presented a lecture during the department's Composers Forum class
- Held one-on-one composition lessons to undergraduate and graduate composition students
- Presented to the orchestration class on the topic of composing and arranging for wind quintet
- Held two open presentations and rehearsals of my works
- Residency culminated in a concert of a commissioned reed trio, *Filigree*, written for Jen Weeks, Erika Block, and Pat Nelson; as well as my arrangement of the excluded movements of Gyorgy Ligeti's Musica Ricercata for wind quintet.

Vienna Summer Music Festival: Composers Forum – Vienna, Austria | June 2023
- Worked with composers and performers from around Europe and the Americas.
- Recorded a solo violin piece with Irvine Arditti
- Performance of my string quartet *Mycelia* by Mivos Quartet.
- Engaged in lectures and masterclasses with renowned composers, such as Tina Tallon, Anthony Green, Oliver Weber, and Alexandra Karastoyanova-Hermentin.

Iceberg New Music Institute – Vienna, Austria | July 2023
- Collaborated with members of Iceberg New Music, as well as performers from Austria and nearby countries.
- Had a saxophone and piano piece recorded and performed by Joel Diegert and Alfredo Ovalles.
- Engaged in masterclasses and lessons by members of Iceberg New Music, predominantly Max Grafe, Alex Burtzos, and Jack Frerer.
- Participated in a masterclass led by Oscar Bianchi.

Splice Institute – Online | June 2021
- Participated in intensive workshops focusing on advanced electronic music techniques.
- Studied SuperCollider programming and sound synthesis with Tae Hong Park.
- Explored visual and audio processing in Max/Jitter (jit.gen) under Sam Wells.
- Collaborated virtually with composers and artists, broadening technical expertise and creative applications in electronic composition.

RESEARCH

- **"The Phenomenological Approach to Ear Training" (2026) Textbook, in preparation**

  The Phenomenological Approach to Ear Training develops aural fluency by beginning with students' direct experience of sound and connecting that experience to musical terminology and notation. Its central sequence (Hear → Describe → Classify → Name → Drill) creates an iterative loop that allows the student to translate their individual aural experience into the global language of music. The book is a practical undergraduate ear training textbook that covers a standard four-semester sequence. The book integrates listening, audiation, melodic and harmonic dictation, sight singing, and rhythmic practice within a tonal and modal curriculum. It addresses music majors whose performance experience and theoretical preparation may differ substantially. A student may know how to construct a chord without recognizing its sound, or reproduce a melody without being able to notate it. These differences require more precise instruction than additional repetitions of the same task. The central aim of The Phenomenological Approach to Ear Training is to give students a concrete method for identifying what they already hear and developing what they cannot yet distinguish. For instructors, the book supplies exercises that reveal whether a difficulty concerns attention, memory, melodic motion, tonal orientation, or notation. Guided comparison, scaffolded assignments, and varied sound examples support focused practice and informative feedback.

- **"Visualizing Harmonic Space" (2024) Article, in preparation**

  "The proposed analytical model introduces a comprehensive and nuanced method for qualifying the relationships between adjacent chords with respect to their positions in harmonic space. One of the primary ways in which the motion between chords is analyzed is through voice leading. This new model additionally looks at chords through the concept of harmonic distance. Three salient properties of harmonic motion were then accounted for - unweighted positional distance ($\Delta\mu$), weighted positional distance ($\Delta\varphi$), and root distance ($\Delta\varrho$) - creating a

model for measuring the harmonic distance of many types of harmonic progressions. Observing how these three salient parameters interact with one another creates a meaningful analysis of harmonic progressions that unlocks both interesting features of such progressions that were otherwise unseen, as well as a way to visualize and qualify the most sonically peculiar parts of the progressions. The model becomes even more useful when examining similarities between harmonic gestures between a wide gamut of musical examples."

- ***Harmonic Space*** **(2024) Book, in preparation**
  "This manuscript explores harmonic space as a framework for analyzing chord progressions, focusing on the measurement of harmonic proximity and its interaction with voice leading. Mapping chords onto the *Harmonic Proximity Graph* reveals unique properties of harmonic progressions that are otherwise unnoticed or unclear when using alternative methods. These properties of harmonic distance provide valuable insights into the relationships between adjacent chords. Through analyses of diverse repertoires—from Renaissance madrigals and jazz standards to contemporary music—this approach reveals underlying structures that contextual systems cannot fully capture. Moreover, the model illustrates how harmonic and voice-leading spaces often oppose one another but together highlight nuanced aspects of progression dynamics. This study's findings bridge gaps in traditional systems, providing a unified approach to understanding how chords move through harmonic space across genres and styles."

- "Psychoacoustical Dissonance as a Tool for Musical Analysis" **(2023) Article, unpublished**
  "The human auditory system's remarkable ability to perceive dissonance has prompted extensive research on the subject, including the work of Hermann von Helmholtz, R. Plomp & W. J. M. Levelt, and William Sethares. This article explores the complex nature of psychoacoustical dissonance, proposing a model to analyze chords and vertical sonorities in musical excerpts, considering the direct perception of music and its relationship to the human auditory system. Building on the foundation laid by previous research, this model offers a new perspective for examining the intricacies of musical excerpts, providing valuable guidance for nuanced performance, and potentially unveiling a different understanding of how humans perceive dissonance. By integrating this model with other analytical methods, a more comprehensive approach to musical analysis can be achieved, enriching our appreciation and experience of music as a whole. As our understanding of psychoacoustical dissonance and the human auditory system continues to evolve, so too will our approach to interpreting and performing music, ultimately enhancing our connection to the rich tapestry of sound that surrounds us."

References located on following page

REFERENCES (TEACHING)

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REFERENCES (MUSIC COMPOSITION)

Prof. Richard Cornell, Ph.D.
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Prof. John H. Wallace, D.M.A.
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Timo Andres
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REFERENCES (MUSIC TECHNOLOGY)

Jonathan Rochelle
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Bryant Jenkins
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Nathan Davis
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REFERENCES (GENERAL/MISCELLANEOUS)

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