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# Refugia festival

Environmental conservation through sound

September 28, 2025

Nichols Arboretum

Ann Arbor, MI

In partnership with

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AND NICHOLS ARBORETUM

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# WELCOME TO REFUGIA FESTIVAL 2025!

Refugia Festival began as a bold idea: to create place-based programs featuring music performances, educational workshops, and community stewardship that celebrate the beauty of our natural soundscapes and advocate for their preservation. Since its inaugural season in 2024 at Nichols Arboretum, the festival has brought together artists, scientists, and community members to celebrate soundscapes as essential to both cultural expression and ecological health. Born out of my doctoral research on the relationships between our human-made music and the music of the Living Earth, Refugia Festival has already inspired audiences to listen to their environment in new ways.

Throughout the day, you will have the opportunity to experience an inspiring lineup featuring Michigan-based artists, educators, and organizations. New to this year's festival is Field Resonances, a community-curated, "pop-up" multimedia arts gallery where local artists share nature-inspired work. In addition, the unveiling of our first of many Soundscape Meters will deepen awareness of the Arboretum's acoustic ecology and invite you to sonically engage with your environment long after the festival ends.

Whether you are a music lover, a conservationist, or simply looking for an excuse to play in the Arb, Refugia Festival offers a space to connect with community and the natural world through sound. I hope that this year's Refugia Festival allows you to listen, learn, and discover how sound connects us to the ecosystems we call home.

Alexis C. Lamb  
Founder, CEO, Artistic Director  
Refugia Festival





September 28, 2025

Nichols Arboretum

Ann Arbor, MI



- 12:00 PM**     **Welcome Gathering**
- 12:15 PM**     **Stephanie Vasko**  
Concert
- 12:40 PM**     **Yvonne Pruneau Quartet**  
Concert
- 1:05 PM**     **Using birdsong to monitor the population  
of Kirtland's Warbler**  
Workshop by Bill Rapai
- 1:40 PM**     **Field Resonances Block #1**  
**FLYDLPHN**
- 2:05 PM**     Concert
- 2:55 PM**     **Play along with Regenerate! Orchestra**  
Workshop
- 2:55 PM**     **Native Plants Fall Seed Foraging**  
Service Activity by Seeds to Community
- 3:40 PM**     **Sound Mapping for Wildlife Welfare**  
Workshop by David Clipner
- 4:15 PM**     **White Flowers**  
Concert
- 5:05 PM**     **Listening After Natural Disasters**  
Workshop by Hailey Becker
- 5:40 PM**     **Field Resonances Block #2**
- 6:00 PM**     **Festival Closing Remarks & A2JF  
"Traveling Sound Museum" Instrument Reveal**
- 6:15 PM**     **Regenerate! Orchestra**  
Concert

# Stephanie Vasko



PC: Vasko (CC-BY-NC-DC license)

Stephanie E. Vasko is a performance artist who creates works with sound, electronics, sculpture, coding/software, video, and photography. Often taking inspiration from nature and natural phenomena, she combines field recordings, synths, software, and gestural interfaces to perform works that invite audience participation. She has performed at a variety of festivals across the United States. She is the co-founder of both the Ambient Annotations experimental music series and the Reverberator experimental music festival in Lansing, MI.

## **Program:**

“From Dawn till Dusk//Dances and Duels”

This interactive performance will take audience members on a journey through Michigan’s natural spaces from dawn to dusk. Using a mixture of prompts and visualizations, perspective taking, field recordings, virtual synthesis, electromagnetic field listening, microphones and sensors, and audience participation, this performance will highlight the sonic dances and duels between humans and the environment. Audience participation is highly encouraged.

**12:15-12:35 pm**

**Main Stage**

# Yvonne Pruneau



Yvonne Pruneau is a composer, pianist, and improviser based in Detroit MI. She received a BA in piano performance as well as an MMus in composition/theory from Wayne State University. Her music explores conjunctions of emotional resonance within calculated and harrowing constructs through fixed media, sampling, synthesizers, field recordings, performance art, and electro-acoustic invention. She is fascinated by systems of information and circular ecosystems of culture, how they form, and how they will unravel. Yvonne's art and sound-world traverse themes of extrarealism, dystopia, nature, technology, sense experience, and transsexualism.

## **Program:**

"Landfill Garden" by Yvonne Pruneau

## Performers:

Yvonne Pruneau - piano and electronics

Indira Edwards - viola

Sean O'Connell - violin

Brenden Callies - cello

**12:40-1:00 pm**

**Main Stage**



# Bill Rapai



Bill Rapai is executive director of the Kirtland's Warbler Alliance and a member of the Kirtland's Warbler Conservation Team. The Alliance's mission is to facilitate connections between people, the jack pine ecosystem, and the Kirtland's Warbler to ensure the long-term conservation of the rarest migratory songbird in North America. Among his responsibilities is identifying, training and deploying volunteers to help with a census that monitors the health of the population by counting birds by listening for their song.

He is a former newspaper editor (Detroit Free Press and The Boston Globe) and the author of three books, including The Kirtland's Warbler: The story of a bird's fight against extinction and the people who saved it, published by University of Michigan Press.

## **Program:**

"Using birdsong to monitor the population of Kirtland's Warbler"

The Kirtland's Warbler, once on the brink of extinction, is among North America's rarest migratory songbirds. This workshop invites participants to explore the bird's story through sound—hearing its distinctive song alongside other voices of the jack pine ecosystem. Through guided listening and a demonstration of census protocols that helped save the species, we reflect on the challenges of fieldwork, the resilience of fragile habitats, and why this one bird matters.

Includes audio samples from Xeno-canto and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

**1:05-1:35 pm**

**Main Stage**

# Field Resonances

A community-curated, multimedia, “pop up” arts gallery inspired by nature

## Block 1 Program

### “Microcosmos” - Josh Epperly

"Microcosmos" is a piece composed entirely for electric guitar. "Microcosmos" was inspired by the songs of cicadas and crickets, whose choruses are a defining and joyful characteristic of Michigan summers. For me, their songs are also portals into deep time. Cicadas and crickets were the first terrestrial species to evolve mechanisms for sonic communication. Cricket wings with sound-making structures first started appearing in the fossil records nearly 300 million years ago, at the end of the Paleozoic Era. Before these insects, the only sounds on Earth were of wind, water, and geologic activity. “Microcosmos” is meant to take the listener on a journey through geologic time, starting quietly with field recordings of these insects and ending with the loud, seismic activity of an Earth before the introduction of song.

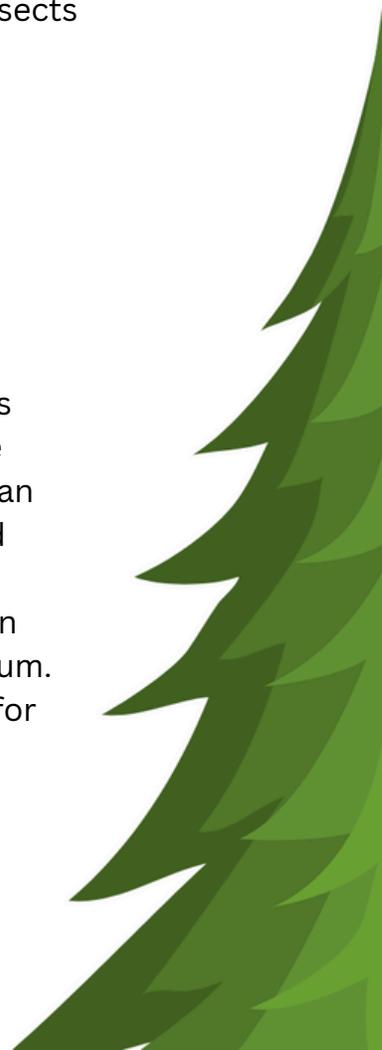
[https://www.instagram.com/bioprism\\_music/](https://www.instagram.com/bioprism_music/)

### Kaitlyn Wilson and Ladina Schaller

Ladina Schaller and Kaitlyn Wilson are performing artists with practices based in dance and improvisation. Both performers are undergraduate seniors in Dance at the University of Michigan. Ladina comes to Michigan from Switzerland to study Dance in addition to Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology. Originally from Kansas, Kaitlyn is studying Environmental Studies and Dance. Their duet presented at Refugia is an improvisational score inspired by the sights and sounds of the arboretum. The work explores human relation to the natural world and advocates for greater environmental awareness.

**1:40-2:00 pm**

**Field Resonances Stage**



# FLYDLPHN



Based in Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti, FLYDLPHN is a mixed chamber ensemble that advocates for composers by empowering collaborative unrestricted play. FLYDLPHN cultivates a distinctive panoramic soundscape making extensive use of electro-acoustic, multimedia, and improvised performance. We desire to build a community that empowers the sharing of art from early-career composers and underrepresented voices, and we do so with our various productions in compelling spaces throughout the year. Ultimately we are a collective of friends who are excited to create together. When given one chance to breach the surface of the cosmic soup, we are grateful to be the dolphin in midair showing our best trick to the world.

FLYDLPHN is flutist Lexi Eubanks, clarinetist Oliver Bishop, bassoonist Bryce Richardson, bassist Emani Barber, and percussionists Olivia Cirisan and Ancel Fitzgerald Neeley.

## **Program:**

*utterly, as the sunlight* by Nicole Knorr

*a river* by Hayden Mesnick

*Goose on the Loose* by Mikeila McQueston

*flightpath* by Anuj Bhutani

[Click here to learn more about the composers and their compositions](#)

**2:05-2:50 pm**

**Main Stage**



# David Clipner



David Clipner is the lead faculty member for the Music Production & Audio Engineering program at Washtenaw Community College in the Digital Media Arts Department. He also serves as Director of Education & Wildlife at the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum and Leslie Science & Nature Center, where he oversees programming and live animal training and welfare. Through his family's business, Copper Bear Shire, he and his wife teach homesteading skills and provide services such as native habitat landscaping, doula/birth work, and audio production/recording. One way he looks to make connections between his multiple interests is with his artistic and research-based projects, where he focuses on merging applied behavior analysis and conservation psychology with multimedia performance and exhibition to create thought-provoking experiences that inspire positive behavioral changes.

## **Program:**

“Sound Mapping for Wildlife Welfare”

David will be sharing some of his current work, where he is collecting a large amount of varied data in order to help determine potentially overlooked variables that may affect stress levels and ultimately training plans for captive animals utilized for conservation education. By sharing a unique perspective for habitat design, he hopes to improve the life and welfare of captive animals both under his care and throughout multiple industries.

**3:40-4:10 pm**

**Main Stage**

# White Flowers



PC (clockwise from top left):  
Marisa Klug-Morataya  
Marisa Klug-Morataya  
Marisa Klug Morataya  
Sarah Uddin

White Flowers is a string ensemble that came out of Autophysiopsychic Millennium's theatrical performance *Something Else in the Garden*, based on Dr. Yusef Lateef's novella, *Night in the Garden of Love*.

Autophysiopsychic Millennium (APPM) is a Black-led creative research and performance collective that explores, experiment, and studies the music philosophy and spiritual works of world-renowned multi-instrumentalist musician, composer, author, visual artist, professor, Afro-Futurist, and Detroit native, Dr. Yusef Lateef.

White Flowers integrates musical compositions based on environmental themes and climate consciousness to initiate a cultural discourse around climate change and the importance of addressing it before it's irreversible. These are themes discussed in Dr. Lateef's *Night in the Garden of Love*, which is set on a dying Earth due to human destruction and corruption. These compositions will engage deep human emotions to connect with climate change issues through a social, political, and cultural lens. They will serve as a platform to highlight the gravity of the climate emergency.

White Flowers is:  
LuFuki - guitar  
King Sophia - cello  
AnJelic - harp  
Aya Sekine - keys

**4:15-5:00 pm**  
**Main Stage**

# Hailey Becker



Hailey Becker is an intermedia artist and researcher who blends installation art and scientific research to better understand how humans process ecological loss. Her work is highly collaborative, and she enjoys bringing seemingly unrelated people together through her projects. Becker is an MFA student in the Department of Art, Art History, and Design and a Ph.D. Candidate in the Human Dimensions of Natural Resources Lab in the Department of Forestry at Michigan State University.

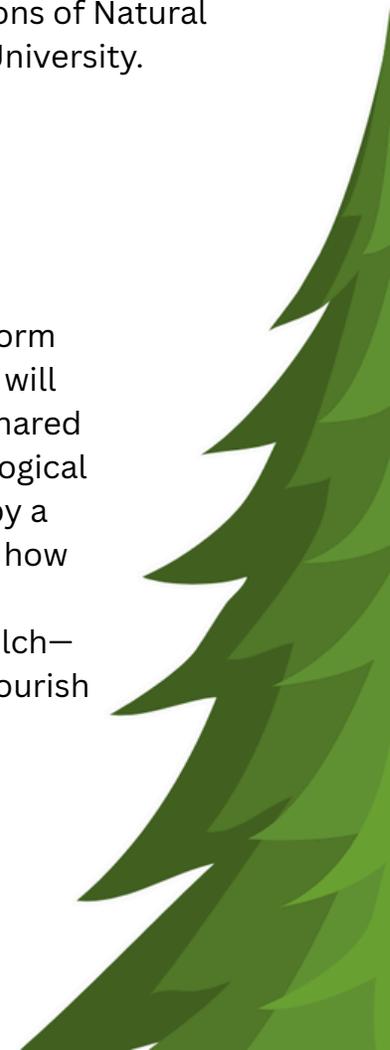
## **Program:**

“Listening After Natural Disasters”

This workshop invites participants to reflect on the August 24, 2023 storm that caused extensive damage to the Nichols Arboretum. Together, we will explore the emotional and ecological impact of such events through shared listening and dialogue. Participants will be invited to complete an ecological grief survey before engaging in a guided listening exercise supported by a companion zine. The session will conclude with an open discussion on how we process natural disasters and changing landscapes. As a gesture of renewal, each participant will receive a small biodegradable bag of mulch—created from the ashes of fallen trees in the Arb—to bring home and nourish their own gardens.

**5:05-5:35 pm**

**Main Stage**



# Field Resonances

A community-curated, multimedia, “pop up” arts gallery inspired by nature

## Block 2 Program

### “Feeding 1” - Josh Cheng

Josh Cheng is a musician and sound engineer studying at the University of Michigan's Performing Arts Technology program. His work "Feeding 1" amplifies the sound of surrounding nature, uplifting the natural resonances in the acoustic environment through feedback loops.

<https://www.instagram.com/funhobby1000/>

### Me-Again Movement Medicine: Root Chakra Dance - Megan Sims

Meet Megan Sims, the visionary force behind Me-Again Movement Medicine – a transformative journey designed to help you release fear and stress, go deep, and unlock your creative flow, gently guiding you back to the heart of yourself. No experience necessary! Connecting the realms of Nature, Movement, Imagination, and Community, Megan, aka Me-Again, brings a unique blend of magic to the healing arts. Nia, InterPlay, and Eden Energy Medicine factor in as major threads of the braid woven together to serve as our critical medicines. With a belief that we heal best in community, she has crafted the Me-Again Medicine Show – a masterfully facilitated, magical, and ever-evolving synthesis of creative, healing, grounding, expanding, and holistic movement techniques.

<https://meagaindance.com/>

**5:40-6:00 pm**

**Field Resonances Stage**



# The Regenerate! Orchestra



The Regenerate! Orchestra is a radical experiment in inclusive music-making. It seeks to reimagine the institution of the symphony orchestra with human connection, play, and community at its center. It makes music from a queer, nature-centric perspective. Each event brings together several dozen community soundmakers from across Southeast Michigan to make ambient, site-specific soundscapes and to commune with other area creatives.

**Program:**  
“HONEY”

HONEY is a sonic immersion inspired by cicadas, love, and the rhythms of nature.

[Click here to see the complete list of Regenerate! Orchestra performers](#)

**6:15-7:00 pm**  
**Main Stage**



# Field Resonances

A community-curated, multimedia, “pop up” arts gallery inspired by nature

## Field Resonances Artists

### Josephine Sullivan Photography

Ranging from the rivers of East Lansing to the trees of Mackinaw City, these photos show the small, quiet moments of critters living their lives in nature. These animals are common in our everyday lives and are often overlooked as a result. By focusing on them in a photographic medium, we can appreciate the details we may have never noticed before.

Website: <https://www.josephinesullivanphotography.com/>

Instagram: [@josephinesullivanphotography](https://www.instagram.com/josephinesullivanphotography)

Pricing: Framed: \$40; Prints: \$20

### A Sudden Light - Kas Brajkovic

Sometimes, the state of the Great Lakes ecosystems can seem dire and drab. And although this can certainly be true in many situations, it's important to recognize what still lingers and what we aim to conserve and restore. Great egrets are still pure, strutting through landscapes of marshes and wildflowers. Blue skies and flying songbirds still prevail, and rainbows still shine after a storm. This work serves as a reminder to see the bright side of our environments, and to help us remember why we should care so much in the first place.

Website: [YamsDraws.net](http://YamsDraws.net)

Instagram/tiktok: [@YamsDraws](https://www.instagram.com/YamsDraws)

Pricing: \$620

**All Day**  
**Field Resonances Stage**



# Field Resonances

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## Field Resonances Artists

### Desire, Desire - Reese Ford

“Desire, Desire” is a painting depicting a collage of natural imagery appearing in man-made objects, from abstracted ammonite textures from the CD disk of The Sundays’ album “Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic,” to flowers and dots present in a quilted fabric square. The digital collage reference was assembled using selective Photoshop filters that abstracted, distorted, and changed the characteristics of each image. In this way, the naturally-occurring and the man-made blur into an amalgamation of what is appreciation of nature versus what is simply already growing without human influence.

Website: <https://reeseford.myportfolio.com/>

Instagram: [@riise.](#)

Pricing: \$350

### BJ Jarvis

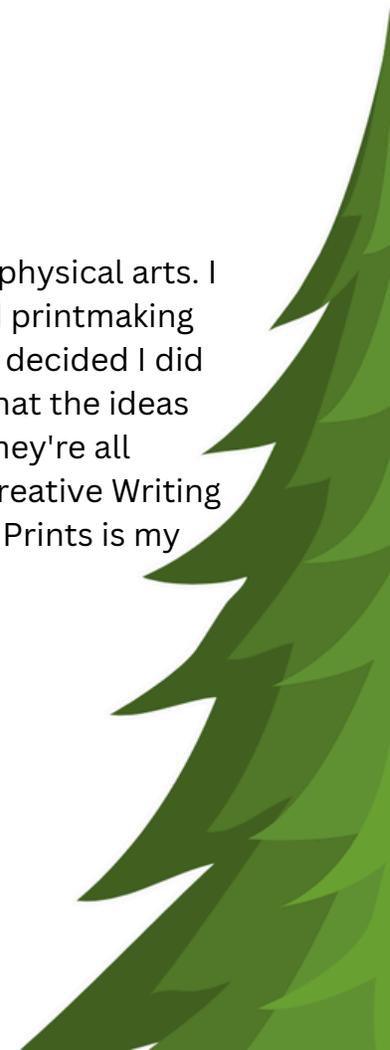
I consider myself a poet but I had never been committed much to the physical arts. I remembered briefly this summer how much I enjoyed lino-carving and printmaking when my super cool art teacher had us try it out in middle school, and decided I did want something tactile to work on. So, this is a passion project. I feel that the ideas and patterns of my designs go very hand-in-hand with my poetry, as they're all inspired by similar things. I am a queer person studying Ecology and Creative Writing from a very small town in Northwestern Vermont, so Present Evolving Prints is my physical manifestation of all my passions.

Instagram: [@briannajarvis.poetry](#)

Pricing: \$5-10 for smaller prints; \$15-25 for larger prints

## All Day

## Field Resonances Stage



# Field Resonances

A community-curated, multimedia, “pop up” arts gallery inspired by nature

## Field Resonances Artists

### Monarch Waystation Soundmap - Alex Wand

Monarch Waystation Soundmap documents long-distance cycling expeditions that trace the migratory routes of the threatened Western monarch butterfly. During month-long journeys from the Pacific Northwest to California's Central Coast, we establish butterfly waystations by sowing milkweed seeds—an essential food source for monarchs—on roadsides and underutilized land, while creating geotagged musical responses to each site through field recordings and performances.

The film investigates how music practices might contribute to multispecies flourishing. Through specialized recording equipment including electromagnetic sensors and geophones, combined with contemplative listening techniques we call "Sense-able Sonic Practices," the project explores the monarch's perceptual world and reveals new ways for people to access modes of awareness that work toward the ongoingness of threatened species. MWS demonstrates how creative practice can function as both habitat restoration and a vehicle for cultivating ecological awareness across species boundaries.

Created in collaboration with filmmaker Kyle Baker, dancer/choreographer Jessica Hemingway, and musician/visual artist Lydia Barrett, the film weaves together field recordings, original compositions, dance, and stop-motion animation to tell the story of this multispecies collaboration.

Pricing: \$15

**gab suprenant**

*untitled* - tapestry  
(not for sale)

**All Day**

**Field Resonances Stage**



# Thank you to Refugia Festival's Partners and Supporters!

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