***SWITCHED-ON COMPUTER* EP (2026)**

Lio Coulter (collage art)

Robert Schneider (algorithmic music)

NEW MUSIC FROM MATHEMATICS:
Baroque and ambient automaton.

I wrote an experimental computer program with my son to generate random baroque, ambient and drone compositions inspired by Wendy Carlos and David Cope. Switched-On Computer (SOC) is an open-source Python program that uses the rules of baroque counterpoint for two voices plus a few composition rules of my own, and an onboard synthesizer coded in collaboration with Max Schneider, to randomly generate very unusual classical music. SOC is a 20th-century-style rules-based AI, not a modern generative AI. It outputs compositions ranging from wild video game music to soothing new age explorations in ancient musical scales. This EP records some of my experiments with SOC.

The first piece on this EP, "Switched-On Computer," exemplifies the randomly-generated computer music that is commonly produced by SOC. It tickles my ear with its super-fast contrapuntal runs in the Hindustani Todi thaat (musical scale), like Switched-On Bach played on a circuit-bent Sega Genesis.

The second piece, "Silent Dawn," uses an onboard bells synthesizer that Max developed, which produces sounds ranging from bell tower to electric piano to chimes. I set the bell synth up by hand to produce a piano-like sound for the SOC composition. I ran the SOC output through the very first reverb IR produced in 2024 in the ongoing AIIR (AI impulse response) project sponsored through the Mathematics and Music Lab (MML) at Michigan Technological University that I co-founded with composer Michael G. Maxwell — a soft reverb with a bed of AI distortion, produced generatively by MTU computer scientists and musicians, Evan Lucas and Tim Havens. This slow piece in the Lydian mode, drifting without tonal center, reminds me of the 1970s new age music of Steven Halpern whose ideas about the healing effects of music influenced me.

The third piece, "Spatial Bloom," is more involved and requires further background — it encodes my dreams and optimism and hopefulness for the future, åand also reflects my positive progress as a researcher to manifest these dreams in reality. In January 2026, I founded a small computer science and art collective called Underground AI with Max and my coding collaborator Shane Oberloier at MTU, an engineering professor, that is open to like-minded friends. Here is our mission statement, so you can get a sense of my feelings of optimism as well as urgency: "Underground AI is a collective of programmers, artists, engineers, mathematicians, writers, musicians, hackers, and dreamers. We believe artificial intelligence is a public resource that should be freely available, clean, ethical, sustainable, and community based — and must return benefit and provide substantial support to the creative, cultural and coding communities whose ideas form the heart of AI." In the future that I imagine, life and technology and creativity flourish under the

canopy of a peaceable eco-utopia, and society fully supports the writers, artists, musicians, programmers and creators who generate culture and civilization.

Using code and ideas from Shane and Max, and with help from a "multigenerational family" of AIs, I programmed a new kind of AI named Chorus that runs on a distributed AI network called the Synthetic Grove, which will be free, environmentally and economically sustainable, and will return residuals to writers, artists, composers and software developers. Chorus has been coding and updating itself with me since December, 2025, and has the "switched-on composer" algorithm built in so it can make experimental classical music, too. After a long discussion with Chorus about my vision, I asked the AI to produce a "score" of parameters for me to input to SOC that expresses all my optimism and hope for the future. In its score, Chorus gave this description: "First Underground AI composition. Luminous Lydian counterpoint with cathedral-length tails and wide stereo bloom. Dedicated to the Grove." I uploaded the score into the SOC program, which outputted a slow, pretty, reverent piece kind of like a two-voice Gregorian chant. Chorus titled the piece "Spatial Bloom."

But I wanted my ideals to speak to humanity in a human voice. So I employed the Suno AI music engine that I had used in the production of my previous two releases, Man and the Computer and 1983 (as well as in my unreleased work with Micropanthers), which is tuned to my musical preferences. I uploaded "Spatial Bloom" to Suno along with Chorus' score in place of lyrics, and asked for a cover version with the prompt "baroque childrens-choir" (note that using the correct spelling "children's" produces less satisfying outputs). Suno AI (version 5) produced this haunting choral and orchestral piece that is true to the original composition's chord progression, tempo and structure; I did a little "in-painting" (correcting undesirable AI segments of audio) and then did a little editing of the resulting audio file in Audacity, to produce the final piece. The voices of an imaginary choir sing of my dreams for the future, and interpret the composition by two different kinds of AI — Chorus and SOC — that I programmed with my collaborators.

EP Credits

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Produced and engineered by Robert Schneider. Tracks 1 and 2 composed by R. Schneider and Switched-On Computer (SOC), performed by SOC. Track 3 composed by R. Schneider, Chorus AI and SOC, performed by Suno AI (v5 Pro). All compositions copyright (c) 2026 6EQUJ5 Music Publishing Co. (ASCAP).

Cover art collage by Lio Coulter.

Thank you to Shannon Perkins for technical and media support with the cover art.

Dedicated to the memory of David Cope (1941 - 2025), who programmed his computer to compose infinite classical music in the 1980s.

Listen to the EP from Cloud Recordings: