



Calvin Van Zytveld

Ph.D. Student in Music, admitted Autumn 2023

Bio

BIO

Calvin Van Zytveld is a Ph.D. candidate in Musicology who is also pursuing a Doctoral Certificate in Composition. His research focuses on sound recording and music notation. He is working on a dissertation titled 'Fixing Music: the Remediation of Sound and Performance through Notation and Recording 1958-2028,' which explores the means and motivations for fixing and affixing sounds past or future, real or fantastical. It includes chapters on text scores, microphone arrays, dynamic compression, and the pre-history of the Digital Audio Workstation (DAW).

Calvin went blind suddenly and unexpectedly in 2020 due to Leber's Hereditary Optic Neuropathy (LHON).

He is the Head Designer for BLIND ENVY, a project based at Stanford's Center for Computer-based Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA) to make the first-ever non-visual digital devices for recording and editing audio. BLIND ENVY is a 2026 recipient of the Magic Grant from the Brown Institute.

An avid cellist, he has given solo and chamber music performances in Canada, Sweden, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Spain, and China and played with such musicians and ensembles as Gustavo Dudamel, Robert Spano, Ludovic Morlot, Per Tengstrand, the Richardson Chamber Players, and the English Concert.

His compositions have been performed by Ensemble Mosaik, Plymouth Chamber Players, NEKO3, Distractfold, Peninsula Women's Chorus, Grand Rapids Choir of Men and Boys, Princeton University Orchestra, and the Princeton Camerata.

He co-directs and performs in two festivals in his hometown, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Founded in 2016, Plymouth Chamber Players offers classical chamber concerts free of charge and features members of the Detroit, Chicago, Houston, Atlanta, and Grand Rapids symphony orchestras. Across town, 2026 was the inaugural year of Fountain Fest. The festival stretched across four days and included punk rock, rave, stand-up comedy, film screenings, live-coded choir and organ, jazz, free improvisation, and guided meditation.

Calvin graduated summa cum laude in music from Princeton University, where he studied with Steven Mackey and Donnacha Dennehy. He pursued master's degrees at the University of Michigan, studying composition with Bright Sheng and cello with Richard Aaron.

Recent awards and fellowships include the 2025 Chair's Award for Excellence in Teaching, the 2026 New Music USA Creator Fund, the RAISE fellowship for community-based research, and the Stanford Interdisciplinary Graduate Fellowship (SIGF).