Critical Response #3: Message in a Bottle

Music 356 / CS 470 "Music and AI"
Instructor: Ge Wang | Stanford University | Winter 2023

For this critical response, you are prompted to reflect on your own journey throughout this quarter so far and write a few (~500) words on what you might say to someone thinking about studying / working with AI (either in music or otherwise). Given the intended brevity of this exercise, rather trying to cover a lot of ground, focus on just one aspect and develop that. This "message in a bottle" can be intended for a student or a friend or a community of people (e.g., your fellow students, CS peers, artists/musicians peers curious about AI, perhaps someone who fears being "left behind" by AI in our world, or those presently working with AI in academia or the industry, or perhaps a pre-frosh, or a high school student, or maybe your parents wondering what you are learning in your Stanford education). What would you want to tell them?

This can take the form of advice based on your experience and reflection, or some "words to the wise". Alternately, you might craft one or more "design principles" for building AI systems. Remember that design principles are not recipes but a lens to think about how to approach a design task, especially in moments of ambiguity. Whatever you choose to do, remember to favor arguments over opinions, ways of thinking over verdicts, well-framed questions over answers. Do it with the intent of helping someone think through some aspect of working with AI, including—or especially— if the way of thinking is not necessarily in the prevailing norms.

What message would you put in a bottle?