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T.O.T.
Real E



album artwork · *Real E*

Bern trio T.O.T. announce their debut album *Real E*, one continuous improvised piece, out January 29, 2027 via T.O.T. Records. First single "j-dog's think" out December 4, 2026

An album about a narrator who is vain, shallow and completely sincere about it.

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"I think, I think, I think so much... I don't want to know, that could get in the way of my think."

That line arrives early on *Real E*, the debut album by T.O.T., and it is a fair introduction to the person speaking. The Bern-based trio of Ruiqi Wang (voice, synths), Cole Frieman (guitar) and Joshua LeBlanc-Demers (drums) built the record around one character. Each of them wrote one of the album's texts, all in the same voice: "a self-obsessed, vain, and shallow individual expressing themselves as honestly as they can." The band says the result is "chaotic and tortured at this album's extreme points, and in its tenderest moments, sarcastic."

Real E is one continuous piece. Over several months of workshops in Bern, the trio fixed the texts and a set of short musical fragments they call "cells", and left the rest open. They recorded the piece from beginning to end, most of it played spontaneously, and only marked out the tracks once the record was finished. "We consider the *Real E* that audiences hear on this recording as a version of this piece," they write.

The first single, “j-dog’s think”, is out December 4. Its words come from a text by LeBlanc-Demers. The narrator has decided they can “determine every thought and every think that I, and you, could ever begin to think”, and that no one “can get in the way of my, or your, think.” The band’s own note for the track goes from there to “PARKING LOT!!!!!” and stops on “HONNNNK !!!!”.

T.O.T. (formerly Two-Options Trio) describe themselves as a band of improvising composers, moving between “heavy experimental rock grooves and quiet, glitched-out minimalism.” Frieman and LeBlanc-Demers studied with John Hollenbeck at McGill University in Montréal, then did their master’s degrees in composition at the Hochschule der Künste Bern with Stefan Schultze, Ralph Alessi, Django Bates and Jim Black. Wang, from Hangzhou and now based in Berlin, works across experimental music, electronics and performance art.

“As a group, we feel that our world is becoming more and more absurd. For us, Real E is a reflection on that feeling, and in a way our contribution to that tendency from a musical standpoint.”

T.O.T. have played in North America and Europe, including Jazz Festival Bern, were featured at Sonorities 2026 in Belfast and have given talks at McGill University’s Jazz Forum. In 2026 they were finalists in the “Out of Genre” category of m4music’s Demo Tape Clinic. *Real E* launches on January 29 with a release event at Schwobhaus in Bern.

RELEASE

Album · *Real E* · January 29, 2027 · T.O.T. Records



First single
“j-dog’s think”
December 4, 2026

LIVE

Jan 29, 2027 · Album release, Schwobhaus, Bern

Feb 28, 2027 · PAKT Raum, Bern

Berlin (Jan) and Swiss dates (Mar) to be announced

CREDITS

Composed and performed by Cole Frieman, Joshua LeBlanc-Demers and Ruiqi Wang. *Real E* recorded and mixed by Marco Di Bari, mastered by Chris Gestrin. “j-dog’s think” mixed by Ky Brooks.

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about the musicians · biographies by the band

Ruiqi Wang 王睿琪

voice, synths

Ruiqi Wang 王睿琪 is a Berlin-based composer-performer, vocalist, and interdisciplinary artist from Hangzhou, China. Working across experimental music, improvisation, electronics, and performance art, she approaches voice, body, song, text, sound, and theatricality with equal curiosity and creative freedom.

At the heart of her practice is an expansive approach to song, extending its possibilities through improvisation, noise, found sounds, and interdisciplinary performance. Embracing the immediacy of song and the unpredictability of sonic experimentation, she thrives on the tension between simplicity and complexity. Her artistic language incorporates extended vocal techniques, synthesizers, live electronics, movement, and theatricality. Lyrics fragment into speech, singing slips into conversation, languages intermingle or are invented, and meaning emerges, dissolves, and transforms. Her performances turn familiar situations into strange, humorous, and sometimes uncomfortable encounters, questioning cultural and social conventions through deeply personal experiences. She takes her subjects seriously, but not necessarily the ways in which they are expected to be presented.

Her recent works include *18 songs of a nomad flute*, a one-person theatre piece reimagining the story of the ancient Chinese poet Cai Wenji 蔡文姬, premiered at Musikfestival Bern in September 2026, and *Girlfriend Piece*, a theatrical concert confronting societal expectations of femininity, beauty, and bodily control. She is also a co-creator, composer, and performer in *Op. I*, an upcoming interdisciplinary dance production directed by Benze C. Werner. She produces experimental pop music as QUI CHIU and performs with the experimental rock band T.O.T.

Her discography includes her debut album *Subduing the Silence* (2023, Orchard of Pomegranates) and the forthcoming *Real E* (January 2027, T.O.T. Records) with T.O.T. She has also contributed to albums and sound projects by Noah Rosa (*SIRIUS*, Original Motion Picture Soundtrack, 2026, Evo-Natura), Tobias Ruetschi (*SCHÄUMEN*, forthcoming 2027, A Tree in a Field Records), and Song Athletics × BORO (*Alchemia*). Her work has received support from Musikfestival Bern's Scratch programme and the Ammann-Falb Stipendium, while T.O.T. was a finalist in the Out of Genre category of 2026 m4music Demo Tape Clinic.

Cole Frieman

guitar

Cole Frieman (*2000, New York, NY, USA) is an Irish-American composer, improviser, and guitarist based in Bern, CH. As a guitarist and composer, Cole bridges chamber music, contemporary music, and rock aesthetics with a jazz-informed approach, uniting these worlds through improvisation. Language is central to his work: text, poetry, and lyrics often influence both the surface and the structure of his pieces. In his current project HOMONYMS, he explores the intersection of poetry and musical cells in an improvisatory setting. He is a co-founding member of the group T.O.T. (formerly Two-Options Trio) and most often operates in small ensemble contexts.

Cole has shared his work in Canada, the United States, Switzerland, Germany, France, and Northern Ireland. He has performed at the TU Jazz Festival in Toronto (2022), OFF Jazz Festival in Montréal (2022), Bern International Jazz Festival (2025).

In 2026, his work with T.O.T. earned a nomination as a Selected Artist Finalist in the "Out of Genre Category" as part of m4music's Demo Tape Clinic and a spot on the Sonorities Festival Belfast 2026 "if" festival radio stream. He was selected for Orchestre National de Jazz's (ONJ) 2026 Académie de Composition where he debuted his piece "who helps you" in Paris.

He earned a master's degree in composition from the Hochschule der Künste Bern (HKB), where he studied with Stefan Schultze, Ralph Alessi, Django Bates, and Jim Black. Before that, he completed a bachelor's in performance at McGill University in Montréal, Canada, under John Hollenbeck.

In 2027, Cole will record and release his debut album as a leader with HOMONYMS, Pierce Through the Sturdiest Barriers!, and will appear alongside T.O.T. in their first release Real E.

Joshua LeBlanc-Demers

drums

Joshua LeBlanc-Demers is a Canadian drummer and composer based in Bern, Switzerland. As a composer, Joshua's main output is writing for his Large Ensemble in Bern, which is made up of musicians coming from both jazz and contemporary music. His work integrates the rhythmic aspects of jazz with an in-depth study of compositional techniques from 20th-century post-tonal composers. He juxtaposes the beauty that can arise from deep compositional organization with the spontaneity of inspired improvisation. As a drummer, Joshua's playing is characterized by both delicacy and intensity situated within grooves and carefully selected soundscapes. He plays drums in Espar, T.O.T., Jack's Kettle, and Marco Di Bari's Liminal. He has a master's degree in music composition from the Hochschule der Künste Bern, where he studied with Stefan Schultze, Django Bates, Ralph Alessi, and Jim Black. He completed his bachelor's in Jazz Performance at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, where he studied with John Hollenbeck. Joshua worked as the assistant to the director of the Orchestre National de Jazz, Sylvaine Hélary, and now works as a contracted arranger and copyist for the ONJ.