*Unclose Your Eyes* is an original electroacoustic work written by Brady Harrison in collaboration with Amy Jones and the University of Dayton Dance Ensemble to accompany dance choreography of the same name. The instrumentation includes viola, electric guitar, a “Push 2” MIDI pad controller controlling a synthesizer, and prefabricated samples that are launched by the musicians on stage. In using an abstract approach to sound coupled with interactive technologies, the work is designed to explore the relationship between the artforms and challenge the boundaries between music and dance; audience and performer.

In the staged production, the live sound of the viola is modulated by the motions of a solo dancer, who is wearing an interactive piece of technology that is engineered to send signals back to the computer that is processing the live sound, and thus the choreography itself takes an active role in the production of sound. The dancer’s motion is intrinsically linked to the sonic atmosphere. As the piece develops, vocal samples of the dancers’ own words interpreting the meaning of the title are woven into a sonic tapestry that lends perspective to a deeper level of meaning for the piece while remaining aesthetically abstract, again fusing each dancer into the musical identity of the work.

Unlike many music and dance collaborations, this project was developed from the dance first, with the musical composition drawing deep inspiration from the original choreography to develop the work’s cohesion. Structurally, the piece’s development waxes between formality and comic jubilance, and comes primarily through exploration of color, texture, and rhythm. The sonic currency is based on different colorations of noise, forcing a heightened sense of awareness in an otherwise austere landscape.