

## Where Words and Music Meet: Writerly Revelations of Deep Listening AWP Panel, 2022

Everyone listens to music, but writers can listen with a special ear for the lessons of craft and artistic structure, for sparking hidden pockets of forgotten or suppressed autobiography, or for guides to one's cultural identity. Music, like writing, is multi-vocal. Writers attempt to translate the music we hear into metaphor, images, narratives, and revelations, as we recount the often unexpected journeys music offers and describe the places we might then arrive at in our writing. Our panelists strive to represent and explore the broad range of music's multi-cultural, ever-shifting landscape: learning the banjo and further connecting with one's African-American musical heritage; how soft rock radio helped animate hidden personal voices in the Philippines; how albums link with the narratives of our lives; an examination of the connections between musical and literary performance; and a dive into the aesthetic of the innovative blues and jazz writer, Albert Murray.

After a brief introduction of the topic and panelists by the moderator (roughly 5 minutes), the panelists will each present their contribution for 10 minutes, for a total of 55 minutes. For the last 20 minutes the panel will be devoted to what we hope will be a lively Q & A. Because our panelists are all nonfiction writers who also write fiction and poetry, we expect a wide-ranging audience, filled with opinions! And there may also be a brief demonstration of African-American banjo playing.

### Panelists:

**Philip Graham** is the author of seven books of fiction and nonfiction, including *Interior Design: Stories*, and *The Moon, Come to Earth: Dispatches from Lisbon*. His work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Paris Review*, and *McSweeney's*. He is a Professor Emeritus of Creative Writing at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and a co-founder and current Editor-at-Large of *Ninth Letter*. His music columns have appeared on the *3 Quarks Daily* website.

**Thomas Larson** is the author of *Spirituality and the Writer: A Personal Inquiry*, *The Sanctuary of Illness: A Memoir of Heart Disease*, *The Saddest Music Ever Written: The Story of Samuel Barber's "Adagio for Strings*, and *The Memoir and the Memoirist: Reading and Writing Personal Narrative*.

**Desirae Matherly** is the Chair of English & Languages at Tusculum University where she teaches writing and serves as nonfiction editor for *The Tusculum Review*. She is the author of *Echo's Fugue*, a book of essays patterned on Bach's *The Art of Fugue*. Desirae earned a Ph.D. in creative nonfiction from Ohio University in 2004 and is a former Harper Fellow at The University of Chicago.

**Francesca Royster** is author of two books: *Sounding Like a No-No: Queer Sounds and Eccentric Acts in the Post-Soul Era*, and *Becoming Cleopatra*. She's published essays on music, culture and identity in *The LA Review of Books*, *Slag Glass City* and others. She teaches English at DePaul University.

**Karen Tongson** is the author of *Why Karen Carpenter Matters*, and *Relocations: Queer Suburban Imaginaries*. She received Lambda Literary's Jeanne Córdova Award for Lesbian and Queer Nonfiction in 2019. She is the chair of Gender and Sexuality studies, and Professor of GSS, English and ASE at USC.