Music and the American Literary Imagination

January 28 – January 30, 2027

Hyatt Centric Downtown Nashville
210 Molloy Street
Nashville, TN 37201

Conference Director:
Olivia Carr Edenfield, Georgia Southern University

Keynote Speaker:
Kirk Curnutt, Troy University

Open Plenary:
Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood: Nina Simone, Langston Hughes, and the Birth of Black Power: A Conversation with Jason Miller, North Carolina State University, and Anthony Reed, Vanderbilt University

Conference Fee: $250

For our 2027 Winter Symposium, the American Literature Association will meet in vibrant Nashville, Tennessee, the "Athens of the South." The Hyatt Centric is a contemporary boutique hotel perfectly located in the heart of SoBro, close to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Music City Center. Single and double rooms will be available for $219 a night plus taxes. Valet parking is available.

The influence of music on American letters is as old and as various as the rich cultural pockets of its people. From the effects of Protestant hymns on the poetry of Emily Dickinson to the blues-inspired fiction of James Baldwin, the profound impact that music has had on the literature of America remains a valuable topic for critical exploration. This symposium will focus on the innovative interplay between American music and American letters.

Please email all proposals to the Conference Director, Olivia Carr Edenfield, at ALA@georgiasouthern.edu by November 20, 2026

Conference Details: Sessions run Friday January 29th – Saturday January 30th with an opening event and welcoming reception planned for Thursday evening, January 28th. The Conference Fee of $250 includes a luncheon on Saturday and several open-bar receptions, including our keynote event on Friday.

Individuals may propose papers, panels, or roundtables by emailing the Conference Director, Professor Olivia Carr Edenfield, no later than November 20, 2026, and preferably earlier. The proposal should include the title of the presentation or panel, an abstract that provides a clear idea of the material that will be covered, a brief vita or description of the presenter's qualifications, and the email addresses for all participants. The proposal should be both pasted into an email and sent as an attachment (preferably in WORD). All emails will be acknowledged in a timely manner.

Those proposing papers and/or panels will be informed of acceptances by November 27, 2026. Hotel reservations will need to be made before January 7, 2027, at which time the conference rate will no longer be available. Therefore, participants will be asked to make their hotel reservations immediately **and** to pay the conference fee by pre-registering on-line by January 7, 2027. A program will be placed on the ALA website prior to our meeting, and printed programs will be available at the symposium.

ALA Guidelines: A common ALA format is a time slot of one hour and twenty minutes with three papers and a chair. This permits time for discussion and three papers of approximately 20 minutes (or nine typed double-spaced pages). Equally common is a panel of four speakers with papers running 15 minutes. The ALA encourages panel organizers to experiment with innovative formats including roundtables, discussion groups, and panels featuring more speakers and briefer papers. Chairs will make sure that the panels start and end on time and that no speaker goes beyond the allotted time limit. We prefer that chairs not present papers on the panels that they are moderating, and no one may present more than one paper at an ALA symposium, though serving on a roundtable or a discussion group and presenting a paper is fine.

AV: The ALA hopes to provide limited Audio Visual support in each of the meeting rooms.

Conference Registration: The conference fee of $250 assists in covering the costs of the conference. There is no additional membership fee for the ALA. We require all participants to pre-register by January 7, 2027, using the links that will be posted on the website in the fall. If you prefer to pay by check, you may find the mail-in registration form on our website. The conference fee of $250 is for all participants; regretfully, we are unable to offer a lower rate for graduate students and independent scholars. If you have a question or concern regarding registration, please contact Olivia Carr Edenfield at ALA@georgiasouthern.edu.

If you have any questions that are not answered by this announcement, please contact the Conference Director. **Thank you for your interest and your support of the American Literature Association.**