

The College-Conservatory of Music and  
the National Endowment for the Humanities present

***Cincinnati Sounds: Exploring a Musical City's Spaces, Places, and Sounds***

**July 6–11 and July 20–25 2025**

**Project summary**

*Cincinnati Sounds* is a week-long residency during which visiting scholars immerse themselves in experiential site-based learning. Participants investigate how Cincinnati landmarks – some still vibrant and carefully preserved, others linger only in public memory – both shape and are shaped by music and sound, exploring themes of education, instruments and sacred places, urban planning, performance, and social justice. Daily explorations through presentations, discussions, site visits, methods of storytelling, and instruction on mapping sound allow participants to hone tools for research and teaching about the connections between music, sound, and landmarks that they can adapt to their own urban spaces.

- [Principles of Civility](#)
- *Cincinnati Sounds: Exploring a Musical City's Spaces, Places, and Sounds has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom.*
- *National Endowment for the Humanities: Landmarks of American History and Culture for Higher Education*
- *Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed on this website or workshop do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.*

## Day 1, Monday

### Sounds as Musical Geography, Sounds as Educational Spaces

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

*What is a musical city? What can it teach us about intersections of geography, historical and modern people, identity, politics, socioeconomics, and values? How might it happen that urban planning and development preserves and curates some places and sounds, but erases others? How does sound transform educational spaces and how do educational spaces transform sound?*

#### MATERIALS

To prepare for the opening day, participants will read and peruse the following course book and digital resources as an introduction to studying sound and spaces as musical geography, mapping place and movement through music history.

- "History," College-Conservatory of Music website ([open access link](#))
- Louis Epstein. [The Musical Geography Project](#) (open access link to digital exhibit)
- Scott Linford. [Cincinnati's West End Blues](#) (open access link to digital exhibit)
- Stefan Fiol. [Noise in the Queen City](#). (open access link to digital exhibit)
- Droumeva, Milena. "Soundmapping as Critical Cartography: Engaging Publics in Listening to the Environment." *Communication and the Public*, 2, No. 4 (December 2017): 335-51.

#### MORNING SESSION 2

##### Presentations by project faculty members

- **Jonathan Kregor**, Professor of Musicology, investigates the College-Conservatory of Music's history through its predecessors, the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music (founded 1867) and the College of Music of Cincinnati (founded 1878).
- **Stefan Fiol**, Professor of Ethnomusicology, explores the question, "What Does Gentrification Sound Like?"
- **Stephen Meyer**, Professor of Musicology, introduces the [Cosmopolitan School of Music](#) (est. 1921), the first United States conservatory to be owned and administrated by Black educators and musicians.

#### AFTERNOON SITE VISIT

**Walking tour** of music educational spaces: the [CCM Library](#) and [College-Conservatory of Music \(CCM\)](#).

#### AFTERNOON SESSION 1

##### Presentation by project faculty member

- **Jenny Doctor**, Professor of Musicology and Head of the CCM Library, leads a tour of the CCM Library as a music educational space.
- **Amy Koshoffer**, UC Librarian, introduces and gives a tutorial on ArcGIS StoryMaps.

#### AFTERNOON SESSION 2

##### Presentation by Workshop Consultant

**Scott Linford**, Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology, develops the day's theme, "Sound and Spaces as Musical Geography," while demonstrating examples of storytelling about musical cities through StoryMaps. In preparation for the evening's site visit (optional), he follows musical pathways of Cincy's visitors and local musicians, such as Pigeon Jarrett, who learned piano at Harriet Beecher Stowe school and became a renowned riverboat artist of jazz and barrelhouse blues.

#### EVENING SITE VISIT (optional)

**Cincinnati Belle steamboat: dinner cruise on the Ohio River**, introducing Cincinnati as a river city.

## Day 2, Tuesday

### Sounds of Instruments, Instrument Making, and Sacred Spaces

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

*How do instruments and their production sites help form sacred communities' identities? What stories do instruments sound about their makers, performers, and the people who experience them?*

#### MATERIALS

To prepare for this day, participants will be given access to:

- files of ephemera relevant to Cincinnati musicking, such as concert programs, marketing and publicity advertisements, and sheet music covers and music pages
- instrument specifications and landmark specifications that house Cincinnati-built instruments
- recorded sound samples of Cincinnati instruments from which to construct stories about instruments and what they tell us about identity and about communities in sacred spaces.

#### MORNING SITE VISIT 1

Transport to **M. P. Rathke, Inc.**, an organ building workshop in the historic village of Newtown. **Michael P. Rathke** leads a hands-on demonstration of pipe finishing and voicing for pipe organs.

#### MORNING SITE VISIT 2

In the 225-year-old **Newtown United Methodist Church**, experience Michael Rathke's "**Opus 8**" **pipe organ**, built especially for the space.

#### AFTERNOON SITE VISIT

Tour of the **Isaac M. Wise Temple (formerly the Plum Street Temple)**, completed in 1866, a landmark of Reform Judaism in America.

**Michael Unger**, internationally renowned Associate Professor of Organ and Harpsichord, will demonstrate the sounds of the historic **Rockwern pipe organ**, built in 1866 by Koehnken & Company and restored in 2005 by the Noack Organ Company.

## Day 3, Wednesday

### Sounds of Community Spaces, Sounds/Silencing of Industry and Progress

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

*How have landmark spaces been integral to musics, musicians, and musickings? How can music cross color lines to create community? How can urban planning, development, and profound change in response to industry and inequitable decision-making impact musicking, sound cultures, and the sounds of a city?*

#### MATERIALS

Participants will peruse readings and ephemera in the *King Records* digital exhibit.

- Reily, Suzel A., and Katherine Brucher, ed. *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Local Musicking*. New York; London: Routledge, 2017. (ebook access via [online catalog record](#))
- *Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Library and Archives*, [King Records](#) (digital exhibit)

## Cincinnati Sounds: Exploring a City's Spaces, Places, and Sounds

### Syllabus

- Suess, Jeff. *Cincinnati: An Illustrated Timeline*. St. Louis, MO: Reedy Press, 2020.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Cincinnati Then and Now*. Photographed by Karl Mondon. London: Pavilion, 2018. DAAP Stacks [F499.C543 S84 2018](#).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Hidden History of Cincinnati*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2016. Langsam Stacks [F499.C557 S84 2016](#).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Lost Cincinnati*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2015. Langsam Stacks [F499.C57 .S84 2015](#).

### MORNING SESSION

**Presentation** by **Jeff Seuss**, *Cincinnati Enquirer* librarian and book author, expert storyteller on local history. He will consider not only the city's lost spaces, but its lost sounds, exploring urban planning, political decision-making, and inequitable socioeconomic factors that affect not only the neighborhoods, but the sound cultures of a city.

### MORNING SITE VISIT

Transport to the **Downtown Main Library of the Cincinnati Public Library**

In the **Cincinnati Public Library's** Genealogy and Local History Department, Librarian **Chris Smith** guides attendees in viewing historical imprints and archival documents relevant to Cincinnati's once-thriving West End, to the city's lost spaces and its lost sounds.

### AFTERNOON SITE VISIT 1

Guided **bus tour** narrated by **Kori Hill** through **Cincinnati's West End** to see the site of the historic **Cotton Club** (1930s–late 1950s), formerly located in what was once the **Sterling Hotel** (built in 1897).

### AFTERNOON SITE VISIT 2

**Toilynn O'Neil**, an art curator and strategist who reimagines gallery spaces, will lead a walking tour outside the former **Regal Theatre**, first opened as the Casino Theater in 1914 and renamed the Regal in 1941. Recently added to the National Register of Historic Places, the 1,500-seat theater was a central and popular venue for vaudeville and live acts with music, before becoming a cinema house. Ms O'Neil will lead a Q&A session in the nearby **Lincoln Recreation Center**.

### AFTERNOON SITE VISIT 3

On return journey, **bus tour of ArtsWave public murals**. Coaches will transport attendees from the West End via 14 Perry Street, the site of the former home of blues singer Mamie Smith, and through downtown Cincinnati past murals *Dreaming Blues* (309 E. 13th St.), *Mr. Dynamite* (1437 Main St.), and *Swing Around Rosie* (1606 Pleasant St.) depicting iconic Cincinnati musicians Mamie Smith, James Brown, and Rosemary Clooney. On the return to Clifton, they will pass *The Golden Muse* (28 W. 13th St.), depicting a mythological muse with the notes to Copland's *Fanfare to the Common Man* (first performed at Music Hall in 1942) flying off the page, and finally an ode to the city's cultural legacy, *The Singing Mural* (1223 Central Parkway), depicting iconic community and musical figures singing together.

## Day 4, Thursday

### Sounds of Performing Spaces

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

*How can performing spaces that host creators and creations from all over the world (re)create and (re)imagine historical and new sounds? How do they function as global spaces connecting people to share their experiences and values and fashion new ideas? How do these spaces tell stories about complicated pasts and become beacons for future social justice and progress?*

#### MATERIALS

Participants will peruse *Cincinnati Opera: A Centennial Celebration* and a documentary film, chronicling Cincinnati Opera's first century (1920–2020). In a shared document, participants will pose and respond to questions formulated by workshop staff about performing and experiencing sound in site-specific spaces.

- *Cincinnati Opera: A Centennial Celebration*. Cincinnati: Cincinnati Opera, 2020.
- [Cincinnati Opera at 100](#) (2020) [documentary film]

#### MORNING SESSION

**Presentation by Evans Mirageas**, the Harry T. Wilks Artistic Director of Cincinnati Opera, in which he will dialogue with participants about drama, music, storytelling, and Cincinnati Opera's associated landmarks: the Cincinnati Zoo, Music Hall, the former Odeon Auditorium and Lyceum Concert Hall (of the College of Music), and the former Pike's Opera House. Cincinnati Opera has long been internationally renowned for its performances of repertoire opera. More recently it is known for partnering, commissioning, and premiering operas exploring themes of social justice with Opera Fusion: New Works (OF:NW), such as Richard Danielpour's *Margaret Garner* (2005, with Michigan Opera Theatre and Opera Philadelphia), Greg Pierce and Gregory Spears's *Fellow Travelers* (2016), David Cote and Scott Davenport Richards's *Blind Injustice* (2019), and Cote and Richard's *Robeson Opera* (forthcoming). Mr Mirageas will provide an introduction to the opera to be performed this evening (optional site visit).

#### AFTERNOON SITE VISIT

**Streetcar tour.** Staff and participants will meet at the Findlay Market Streetcar Stop No. 12 on Race Street. They will ride the **Streetcar Connector** around downtown and loop back to Streetcar Stop No. 8, at Music Hall and Memorial Hall.

Guided tours of **Music Hall** by Cincinnati historian **Thea Tjepkema**. Home to the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, the Cincinnati Pops, and Cincinnati's May Festival Chorus, these halls have housed the sounds of top-ranking artists, musicians, and writers since Music Hall was completed (in 1878).

#### EVENING SITE VISIT (optional)

**Performance (optional) by Cincinnati Opera** from the summer festival.

## Day 5, Friday

### Sounds and Spaces of Freedom and Justice

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

*How can sound communicate, express themes of freedom, and explore issues of social justice? How can spaces create ecosystems of freedom and justice?*

#### MATERIALS

To prepare for this day, participants will be given digital sources with information on some of Cincinnati's leading choral music organizations and the spaces they transform through sounds of freedom and justice. Attendees will also read excerpts chosen from the following:

- Tammy Kernodle. "Having Her Say: The Blues as the Black Woman's Lament." In *Women's Voices Across Musical Worlds*, ed. Jane A. Bernstein, 213–31. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004. CCM Reading Room [ML82 .W697 2004](#).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "I Wish I Knew How it Would Feel to Be Free': Nina Simone and the Redefining of the Freedom Song of the 1960s." *Journal of the Society for American Music*, 2, no. 3 (August 2008): 295–317.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Soul on Soul: The Life and Music of Mary Lou Williams*. 2nd ed. Urbana: University of Illinois, 2020. CCM Reading Room [ML410.W7134 K46 2004](#).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Black Women Working Together: Jazz, Gender, and the Politics of Validation." In *Music in Black American Life, 1945–2020: A University of Illinois Press Anthology*, comp. Laurie Matheson, 85–112. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2022. CCM Reading Room [ML200 .M88 2022](#).
- Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr. *Who Hears Here? On Black Music, Pasts and Present*. Foreword by Tammy Kernodle. Oakland: University of California Press, 2022.

#### MORNING SESSION

**KEYNOTE presentation by Tammy Kernodle**, Professor of Music at Miami University in Oxford, OH, and jazz specialist, who will examine historical, political, and sociocultural issues intersecting in Cincinnati and interpreted and reinterpreted through social justice musics, musicians, and musickings. Following the presentation, Dr Kernodle will dialogue with participants in a Q&A session.

#### MORNING SITE VISIT

Everyone rides to [The Banks](#).

Participants will first self-explore the recently opened [Cincinnati Black Music Walk of Fame](#) (2023), featuring inductees such as Cincinnati-raised Civil Rights Leader and hymn-writer Louise Shropshire, whose "If My Jesus Wills" inspired "We Shall Overcome" and was used by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Then, they will explore the [National Underground Railroad Freedom Center](#) through a self-guided tour.

#### AFTERNOON SESSION 1

**Presentation and roundtable discussion** led by Workshop Consultant **Scott Linford** further exploring the day's theme, "Sounds and Spaces of Freedom and Justice," and developing layers of more complex ideas about changing musical cities through digital storytelling using StoryMaps. Creation of a shared resource list: participants begin to upload readings & other resources they recommend to the Google folder.

## **Post-Workshop Check-in Sessions**

Participants may join post-workshop check-in meetings on Zoom with the Project Director and select members of the workshop team.

### **September 2025**

Meet on Zoom with **Project Director, Kristy Swift**, and **Project Co-Director, Kori Hill**, to consider and discuss participants' questions about ways to incorporate experiential learning and other teaching ideas gleaned from the workshop into course, syllabus, or assignment development in relation to exploring musical cities.

### **November 2025**

Meet on Zoom with **Project Director, Kristy Swift**, **Workshop Consultant, Scott Linford**, and workshop staff member **Amy Koshoffer** to consider and discuss participants' questions about storytelling using ArcGIS StoryMaps and other digital humanities tools in relation to exploring musical cities.

### **December 2025**

Meet on Zoom with **Project Director, Kristy Swift**, and workshop staff, **Stefan Fiol** and **Jenny Doctor** to consider and discuss participants' questions about archival, experiential, personal interview, and other research techniques and approaches in relation to their own research relating to exploring musical cities.