

## NEH Application Cover Sheet (TR-254097)

### Media Projects Production

#### PROJECT DIRECTOR

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**Field of expertise:** Cultural Anthropology

#### INSTITUTION

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Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund  
New Orleans, LA 70118-5665

#### APPLICATION INFORMATION

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**Title:** *American Routes: Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story & Song*

**Grant period:** From 2017-04-01 to 2018-12-31

**Project field(s):** Music History and Criticism; Folklore and Folklife; Cultural History

**Description of project:** American Routes is the weekly, two-hour nationally-distributed public radio program devoted to songs and stories, humanist and artist narratives, that explore humanities and aesthetic issues in American society and culture through the expression of vernacular music and culture. Produced in New Orleans and produced and hosted by folklorist and documentary producer Nick Spitzer. Our current proposal, "American Routes Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story & Song," seeks support of \$225,795 to create 10 new, highly researched two-hour programs featuring in-depth humanities content in 2017-18.

#### BUDGET

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<b>Outright Request</b>	225,795.00	<b>Cost Sharing</b>	93,644.00
<b>Matching Request</b>	0.00	<b>Total Budget</b>	319,439.00
<b>Total NEH</b>	225,795.00		

#### GRANT ADMINISTRATOR

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## **Attachment 1**

### ***American Routes* Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story & Song**

#### **Table of Contents**

***American Routes***  
**“Exploring and Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story and Song”**

**Table of Contents**

<b>Narrative</b>	Page 1
Nature of Request/Humanities Content	Page 1
Creative Approach	Page 9
Audience and Distribution	Page 10
Project Evaluation	Page 15
Rights and Permissions	Page 15
Humanities Advisers	Page 15
Media Production Team	Page 16
Progress	Page 17
Work Plan	Page 18
Fundraising Plan	Page 19
Organization Profiles	Page 19
List of collections of materials to be used by the project	Page 20
Preliminary Interviews	Page 20

**Attachments**

Attachment #1: Table of Contents
Attachment #2: Narrative
Attachment #3: Treatments of Proposed Programs (Script)
Attachment #4: Digital Design
Attachment #6: Bibliography
Attachment #7: Media Team Resumes and Advisor Letters of Support

Attachment #8: Sample

Attachment #9: Budget

Attachment #10: Work Sample Script



## Attachment 2: Project Narrative

### ***American Routes: Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story & Song***

*American Routes is a national treasure! We all can get to a better place with music to know about ourselves ...and each other!*

--Benny Jones New Orleans' Tremé Brass Band leader on tour, Beijing 2015

*My favorite radio show, sometimes it reminds me of a graduate seminar, very informed, humanistic, uplifting, full of insights and true...Thanks for doing what you do. Carry on!*

--Facebook post

*It's the show I listen to driving home from work*

--Garrison Keillor, e-mail

### **Nature of Request and Humanities Content**

*American Routes* is a weekly, two-hour, nationally-distributed public radio program devoted to exploring American life through songs and stories, humanist and artist narratives, and vernacular music and culture. Produced in New Orleans, *American Routes* programs present a wide range of music and musicians woven around a distinct theme or a series of related humanities topics that also extend to other programs. *American Routes* is produced and hosted by folklorist and documentary producer Nick Spitzer, who is also professor of cultural anthropology at Tulane University.

“Exploring and Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story and Song” is how we frame this proposal to deliver a diverse but related array of humanities themes in our weekly broadcast. This is a production grant seeking support of \$225,795 to create ten new, two-hour programs for broadcast nationwide in 2017-2018. Over and above the agreement to credit the NEH on shows funded by the agency, we will give the NEH a full credit in both hours of all 52 programs, new and encore, that we broadcast in a year. The treatments detail ten specific programs – “This Land is Your Land:” American Environmental History in Song; Blues and Healing; Bessie Smith & Mahalia Jackson: “Empress of the Blues” and the “Queen of Gospel”; Visualizing Sound & Sound Visionaries; Miami: Documenting Diversity that Defines the “Magic City”; The Sound of Pluralism: Music as Cultural Identity in New York City Neighborhoods; Roads to Somewhere: Streetscapes, Crossroads, and Pit Stops; “Angola Bound”: Prison Songs & Narratives; Crooked Roads Home: Vernacular Music and the Promise of Return; and The Authentic Future: Promised Lands, Community Cultures, and the Survival of American Vernacular Pluralism.

We detail these ten new programs, but presenting expressions of vernacular humanities through words and music, and interpreting them through interview features and commentary, represents our enduring approach. In other words, this proposal would enable us to do what we have done with pride and conviction for the past seventeen years: to bring the songs and stories of American communities, and their thoughtful interpretation, to the broadest possible audience, with well-researched content and high production values.

This proposal would carry us to our goal of twenty years on the air in 2018, and in a way that culminates our highest ambitions for how radio can help listeners understand the central importance of community-based cultures in the civic life of our plural nation. To this end, we urge you to read especially the letters from our key national advisors, who explain how we limn vernacular humanities, how we approach their interpretation, and how we craft the editorial choices and aesthetics of media art in their representation.

As a companion to the programs, with the intention of reaching a new young audience, we will develop a weekly podcast called “Short Cuts” to expand our audience reach. Each week, Short Cuts will offer listeners a 15-20 minute downloadable episode whose content is related to that week’s broadcast. Episodes will combine interview segments that appear in the broadcast with archival features and expanded content to further expose a younger audience to the voices and cultures we cover in the larger program.

Since its launch in 1998, *American Routes* has been based in New Orleans, the only exception being 5 months of post-Katrina exile to temporary studios in Lafayette, LA. Located since 2008 in the new Alcée Fortier Studios at Tulane University, each week *American Routes* is broadcast on over 300 stations reaching over 470 localities large and small, and up to a million listeners depending upon program and time of year. All current and past programs stream from the website AmericanRoutes.org. Over seventeen years on the air, *American Routes* has garnered coverage in the national press including *ABC News*, *Nightline*, NPR, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Boston Globe* and the *Seattle Intelligencer* among many other media outlets. In 2004, ASCAP recognized *American Routes*’ reputation for quality with an ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award at Lincoln Center for scholarly and artistic excellence – an award normally given only to books. In recognition of Spitzer’s long commitment to public programming in the humanities, as well as his cultural leadership during turbulent times, the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities named him “Humanist of the Year” in 2006. Spitzer was also awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2007 to further his work on traditional creativity in Louisiana Creole communities. Locally in Louisiana, he has been acknowledged at the grass roots with the Spark Professorship (2016) and the James Rivers Prize (2014) in support of research in Louisiana cultures at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette, as well as the Fletcher Prize lecture at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, LA.

With this proposal, Spitzer and the production team at *American Routes* build on several years of work documenting, interpreting, and broadcasting the significance of memory and cultural continuity to the social and economic recovery of communities across America. This focus began as a response to the natural and man-made catastrophe of Katrina in New Orleans; our interest grew as we came to see how the subsequent economic collapse proved similarly catastrophic in communities nationwide. Across the country, we observed the metaphoric and practical importance of intangible cultural benefits to recovery. Initially, a series entitled “Routes to Recovery” in 2012-13 addressed the role of cultural agency in ameliorating social and economic conditions. This evolved to more pointed links between a “useable past,” “cultural sustainability,” and a “creative future” in 2013-14. The 2014-15 grant, “American Routes: From a Useable Past to an Authentic Future,” focused on how cultural memories of a useable past as expressed in aesthetic terms shape understandings of an idealized future. (That grant was incidentally, and sadly, extended into 2016 (b) (6))

(b) (6). The result was a slowing of production with a smaller staff that has since been increased.)

Now we are proposing to build on and consolidate these previous successful music and cultural documentary radio series. The 2016-17 proposal embraces an array of themes related to cultural representation, continuity, revival, creativity, creolization, migration to new places, and return to home lands. It does so with a focused eclecticism that had been the program's hallmark.

*American Routes'* signature ability to cross and connect genres, regions, and cultural forms has enabled us to both maintain a significant audience, and to grow it with diverse, high-quality programs rooted in the shared and distinguishable vernacular musical expressions and meanings that define American cultural life.

In varied ways, each program will explore how specific communities and broader publics address and express cultural continuity. We examine the creative work that draws the past into the present and extends it into hopes for the future – as expressed in stories (narratives, interviews, commentaries), song (lyrics) and music (genres and styles). Additionally, with the critical advice, interpretation and/or interviews of humanities specialists, we will create meta-narratives spoken by these individuals and/or the program host. Out of the dozens of documentary feature and/or interview segments embedded in these programs, several will be offered in edited form by on-going agreement with NPR to *All Things Considered* and to the NPR Music website. They will also selectively reach other major news outlets such as *Fresh Air*, *This American Life*, *On Point*, the *Moth Radio Hour*, etc. All the programs, features and interviews since 1998 stream from AmericanRoutes.org.

“*American Routes: Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities*” puts local, community-based voices at the center rather than the periphery of our national conversation. We strive to broaden the manner in which both humanists and the public think about the sources, symbols, and transformation of culture. We mean to document and reflect a creolizing nation and world, with particular attention to American communities in motion. We emphasize especially America's plural aesthetic manifestations. We embrace the pulsating tension between the singular and plural as an echo of America's dialectical creed: *e pluribus unum* out of many, one.

*I regularly listen to American Routes (and its roots as well). I love the music, the richness, the craft, the depth. It's uniquely American. And it's great to have a generous and knowledgeable guide who is on such good terms with that great variety of musicians.*  
--Albert Borgmann, Professor of Philosophy, University of Montana

Our approach to the vernacular humanities is framed by ideas of cultural creolization, representation, public folklore theory and practice, and critical heritage studies. At the same time, we attend to classic modes related to “sense of place,” biographies of socially transformative artists, aesthetics as potential healing forces metaphorically and even clinically for individuals and communities, and the power of performance and play in shaping consciousness.

Our use of “vernacular” allows us to build on classic linguistic and social formulations of shared culture: the word's Latin root references the common language of the servant or house slave in Roman times, and also signals the intimacy of that sharing across social boundaries. Vernacular

humanities suggest that we address the ideas, aesthetics, identifications, and creations both with and between cultural communities that are less connected or visible to formal governmental, economic, educational, and media institutions. Although the field of folklore studies has been described as the most humanistic of the social sciences and most social scientific of the humanities, the term “folklore” is burdened with anti-modern, antiquated, and ill-informed connotations. Vernacular humanities allows us to work purposely in a wider social framework and to better engage questions about continuity and creativity in culture that may at once be traditional *and* modern...and certainly contemporary regardless.

*American Routes* embraces the creative tension between the organic natural metaphor of “roots” and the travel-based metaphor of “routes.” This tension suggests that there may be both conserving and avant processes – processes that that maintain and create – distinct and shared vernacular culture. Thus, we position the program between media art and ethnography/history, news and cultural information, critique and celebration, edification and entertainment. Writ small, we can call it “the roots of popular music and popular roots music.” We prefer the semantic instability that may emerge for listeners from the confusion or pun of the “roots” vs. “routes” homonym: are we on a road home or a journey to the unknown? It’s the road crooked and slow but enriching; it’s urban and confusing, but also exhilarating. In this zone of semantic elasticity, we can be both iconic and ironic in music choice and commentaries. The connection between roots and routes allows us to celebrate and critique in the same frame, and to recognize both approaches as always interrelated.

Our framing interpretive device is to define vernacular humanities as a shared public discourse between humanities scholars, performing artists, community humanists and others on what we value in the cultural commons, while also advocating tolerance for values and aesthetics that may be less commonly shared. As public cultural workers in the humanities, we see ourselves as progressive inclusivists. This means that we engage with community-based traditional arts and vernacular cultural expression that may only be selectively shared locally, and with arts and expression that may reach far more widely. We are especially attuned to instances where oral literacy has contended with, or remained hidden from, mass media and the internet. Our perspective sets us apart from the more naturalist, materialist, and content/process bounded metaphorical views of cultural conservation and historic preservation, but also allows us to work with processes such as UNESCO’s intangible cultural heritage protocols for “safeguarding” of culture and “preservation through production.” The letters of our humanists at once reinforce our commitment to this approach, and offer productive prods for us as we strive to reimagine its potential as *American Routes* continues to broadcast through 2018.

An on-going radio project like *American Routes* cannot be just humanities scholarship or arts presented for their own sake. In order to attract and sustain a large audience, people must want to tune in. This means we must maintain the highest aesthetic standards in the quality of the songs and stories that we put on air. And yet we need a firm research foundation based on dialogue with our humanists, many of whom are also helpful on air as interviewees. Over the past seventeen years, we have learned to better balance our historic, ethnographic, and aesthetic commitments. We approach interviews as conversations. We use our radio art of the segue and other less obvious sonic production techniques to be as strong as or stronger than mainstream public radio. We have learned how to juxtapose songs and stories in ways that work both

semantically and sonically. Our curatorial process is designed to edify listeners and stimulate their own thinking about musical aesthetics and cultural meanings, while at the same time holding the audience's attention, and representing the public humanities as in a high-quality, accessible, and entertaining format. We know how to attract an audience, and how to prompt them to want to listen carefully.

We are especially careful to remember that with an audience as large as ours, listeners come to the show with wildly divergent backgrounds, interests, and aesthetic preferences. What is familiar or even canonical to one listener may be entirely new to another. Our goal, therefore, is to make the familiar fresh and the unfamiliar legible. For some of our listeners, the sound of an Appalachian fiddle player will be a comforting memory of home – others might say the same of Mahalia Jackson's gospel. But few listeners would say that of both genres. Thus, we endeavor to craft programs that allow listeners to venture out from what they know and listen attentively to cultural expressions that might, at first blush, sound very far removed indeed. We do this first and foremost on the level of the segue: to open a show on Labor Day, for example, we played "Joe Hill" as sung in operatic style by Paul Robeson in 1938, followed by Randy Newman's "Mr. President Have Pity on the Working Man," from 1972, and then "Busted," a Harlen Howard country classic, as sung by Ray Charles in 1963. The three songs together flow beautifully both sonically, with their shared piano accompaniment, and semantically; each piece informs what came after and before. The three songs have, at once, little and everything in common – which makes the segue funny, tragic, ironic, and iconic, and invites listeners to enter the "interpret it yourself" mindset that makes the program engaging. What we achieve on the level of the segued sequence, we also strive to reproduce at the level of the programmed hour and the annual series: to cross and connect categories of cultural identity, familiar and new, catering to an audience that is as diverse as the nation that we seek to reflect back to them.

For the proposed "Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story & Song" programming, NEH funding would support the field travel, additional research and scholarship, humanities advisors and commentators, and additional production personnel necessary to craft complex, in-depth, accessible radio presentations that embrace a multiplicity of humanistic issues, voices, and perspectives. Unraveling and articulating the social and cultural dimensions of music -- especially popular and traditional forms that are often closely identified with vernacular community sources and symbols -- remains an important and not fully explored area of humanities scholarship. Through well-researched, carefully-produced programming, *American Routes* and its contributing scholars will help enhance greater public understanding of how all kinds of vernacular music express and affect American culture. Treatments of the proposed topical programs can be found in Attachment 3-*script*.

Because our radio broadcast represents a weekly flow, not a singular finished commodity like a film or exhibition, we offer summary treatments here rather than scripts or exhibition drafts. The treatments are the creative bridges between theory and practice in researching and producing the programs. They offer a mission statement and analytical apparatus for each program: they describe our central questions, define the goals and methods of our research and fieldwork, identify our carefully selected and committed advisors, and offer us a detailed road map for every hour. Over the past seventeen years, we have learned that a key ingredient to the success of our programs is that we do not finalize scripts or playlists until after we have finished our

interviews and other fieldwork, and consulted extensively with our team of advisors. We understand that with such in-depth scholarly assistance, programs will further develop over time as discussions are held, research goes forward, audio is gathered, interviews completed, scripts written, music chosen, editorial choices made, narratives tracked and post-production edit/mix concluded. Our vast archival holdings, wide circle of expert advisors, and the deep experience of our production team all enable us to respond nimbly in the studio to what we learn in the field.

The varied disciplines of American, cultural, urban, ethnic and regional studies as well as history, literature, communication, linguistics and the study of languages, anthropology, folklore and ethnomusicology (among other humanities and humanities-related fields) have all played consistent and significant roles in *American Routes*' program conception, design and production. NEH support will allow this to continue to be the case in the "Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story & Song" programming. NEH support will infuse these programs and the larger broadcast year with literary and historical context; NEH support will enable our host to consult in greater depth with newly added scholars and those who have assisted us previously, and it will enable us to include humanities advisers in on-air roles where appropriate. This year, as ever, we have called upon historians, ethnographers, ethnomusicologists, and folklorists to assist us in placing the present moment within a historical context. Ethnographers trained in the traditions of anthropology, ethnomusicology and folklore will especially guide us in shaping cultural meaning in the present. The breadth and depth of our advisers' expertise will enhance and shape our presentation.

While we rely on our humanities advisors, we privilege the voices of the culture-bearers themselves. In part, this is because unlike the written work of our academic advisors, our analyses must appeal in a broader setting for learning and appreciation: broadcast media and internet streaming. More fundamentally, though, our view is that when musicians, narrators, performers, and other community members celebrate and critique their own successes and plights – in words and music – their commentaries carry the most power and influence. In this approach, we are guided by the insights of folklorist Bess Lomax Hawes, a longtime presenter of individual traditional artists as "National Heritage Fellows." She argues that by heralding such extraordinary individuals as a representation of public policy:

"...they present to Americans a vision of themselves and of their country, *a vision somewhat idealized but profoundly longed for and so, in significant ways, profoundly true*. It is a vision of a confident and open-hearted nation, where differences can be seen as exciting instead of fear-laden, where men and women of good will, across all manner of racial, linguistic and historical barriers, can find common ground in understanding solid craftsmanship, virtuoso technique and deeply felt expressions."

And yet alongside iconic representations of known songs and artists and idealized ideas, we also sometimes embrace an ironic position, using humor to open up a critique and remind us of the problems of exclusively iconic, nostalgic or idealized treatments of cultural content. Strategically recontextualizing the iconic allows our listeners to appraise such items anew, making new interpretations possible.

*American Routes* is uniquely structured and positioned among nationally-distributed public radio programs to credibly expand its exploration of the proposed topics and humanities issues. As evidenced by its record of prior NEH support, *American Routes*' program format lends itself to an interpretive demonstration of how music, expresses both cultural continuities and discontinuities – revealing the many historic, geographic, racial, class, and gender variations and combinations, conflicts and celebrations that make up American cultural identities. Unusual among public radio programs, *American Routes* has the flexibility and capacity to examine not just all these diverse realms through expressive culture (words and music as performances), but how they are inter-related: that is, how cultures may be defined as much by their creolization and transformation as by isolating and preserving “authentic” or distinct forms of expression.

In this proposal, *American Routes* seeks NEH support to deepen and expand our exploration of the historical and cultural peregrinations and creolizations of “roots” and “routes” music. Again, our program means to juxtapose “roots” as an organic metaphor for the conservation of culture with “routes” as a metaphor for the transformation of culture. “Roots” implies a community-based culture from a place on the landscape, with continuity of identifiable traditions and expressions through time; it suggests the lived conservation of a culture that can be traced in a linear or centric fashion to a source, time, place and group. In musical terms, “roots music” is associated to some degree with antique (though often still practiced) forms like country blues, old-time country and gospel, mountain balladry, traditional New Orleans jazz, regional styles like Cajun/zydeco and Tejano, occupational forms like cowboy songs or African-American work songs. Today, “roots music,” broadly refers to an array of revivals, re-creations, and rock and pop variations on source traditions.

We have used “routes,” meanwhile, to indicate the agency of whole cultures in migration, as when they change their musical style from old-time country to urban honky-tonk, country blues to city blues and R & B, or gospel to soul music, and so on. Beyond rural to urban continua, we have also used “routes” in terms of cultural “crossroads” which may be port or river cities like New York, New Orleans or Miami, or regions with historic cultural encounters like southern Louisiana (African and French), Appalachia (Anglo, Scots-Irish, African American,) or the Upper Midwest (Scandinavian, Polish, German, Native, Anglo) -- any place where two or more previously different cultures may come together and build multiple continuities to varied pasts while creating new identities and expressive forms into the present. We have long presented jazz in many forms -- especially in early New Orleans sources -- and zydeco in French Louisiana as quintessentially creolized. But we have also long seen rock and roll as an emergent mix of blues, country and gospel that conjoins African American with an array of Anglo-Celtic aesthetics. Like jazz, in other words, even if the proper name Creole is not used outside of New Orleans and French Louisiana, we understand rock and roll as creolized. We see musics associated with migrant communities in New York such as salsa, voodoo jazz, or klezmer as creolized in short and long term, too. Creole, in sum, is our way of reconciling roots and routes as a theory of culture.

NEH support will enable us to draw more expansively than we ever have before from scholarship relating to cultural conservation and transformation. We seek to focus especially on vernacular culture that emerges outside institutions of governance, finance, education and media (sometimes in response to them) – and how this culture can eventually become commodified and

common place. Adding this perspective represents a natural extension of recent NEH-supported *American Routes* programming. While we consistently embed critical commentary in program scripts in order to interpret the significance of cultural metaphors and the implied social processes, the specific documentary features and programs supported in recent years by the NEH have allowed us to delve much deeper into humanities topics and issues. With prior NEH support, under the topical heading “Routes to Genius” we focused on the life arcs, biographies and legacies of specific individuals: Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, Woody Guthrie, Hank Williams, Robert Johnson, Ray Charles, Elvis Presley, Sam Cooke, George Gershwin, Alan Lomax and Billie Holiday among others.

To this we now add one long form biographic program (1 hour each) on Bessie Smith and Mahalia Jackson. *American Routes* will examine both the received cultural settings and upbringings of these vernacular artists (i.e. their “roots”) as well as the routes they took to carry and transform those traditions and genres in new places to wider audiences. Their role as women in secular and sacred realms adds to their “avant vernacular” aspect as changers of culture and crossers of boundaries. Smith and Jackson innovated new musical styles that at once reflected and affected social transformation.

Similarly, in an earlier focus on “Routes to Creativity” (also supported by the NEH), *American Routes* developed and broadcast programming that treated the ethnographic, historical and especially aesthetic qualities of specific places associated with vernacular music. This included consideration of key musical cities (e.g. New Orleans and Memphis, Nashville and New York), states (Texas, Mississippi and Alabama) and regions: south Louisiana, New England and the West. In these programs, the organizing principle was wide-ranging profiles of places that have proven to be cultural and musical wellsprings in American life. “Routes to Creativity” focused less on the individual than on the collective impact of selected regions and cities.

This season we seek to add ethnographic depth to Miami beyond its tourism slogan “Magic City.” Miami -- with its Afro Latin-French-English Caribbean immigrant urbanity, mingled with historically black neighborhoods, Jewish retirees from the north, and an ever shining pop sound as a back drop to beach and club life -- contains people called Creoles from the English and French speaking Caribbean, but does not seem so fully creolized as an urban space as our New Orleans home. Nor does it seem so fully creolized as the neighborhoods we propose to highlight in another program this season on New York City. In Jackson Heights, Southeast Asians live side-by-side with Latin Americans; in Inwood, Central Americans, Irish, and Hasidic populations share the streets. In both neighborhoods, these ethnic groups are negotiating new ways to maintain and perhaps create culture – we will document for example, how shifting gender identities are contributing to changes in music, with New York women now leading in Haitian drumming and soloing in Afro-Columbian dance music.

These examples demonstrate how, with NEH support, *American Routes* can create its most in-depth topical approaches to artist and humanist narratives; the cultural aspects of place; and to creative artists’ cultural quests. This humanistic perspective is only possible when sufficient funds allow us the staff, consulting and research time to record and produce the appropriate materials, and find the right voices, to offer definitive humanities programs.



The vernacular humanities – our stories and songs...and their interpretation – tell us who we are, and who we might be. They comfort us with the possibility of stability in the face of a sometimes dizzying modernity, and they challenge us to embrace the possibility of change in the face of a sometimes sclerotic political system and corporate structure. Thus, our broadly inclusive proposal is meant at once as an intellectual position, a practical intervention, and a statement of moral purpose. At a time when our civic polity seems precarious, when leaders in politics, business, media, and the academy seem woefully unable to keep our national fabric from unraveling, we offer this proposal as a way to reflect on what can bind us together as individuals, communities, and a nation.

With NEH support, which enables the help of our humanities advisors, we will be able to continue to document, interpret, and display the best of our communities' vernacular cultural lives to public radio listeners nationally. To an audience beset by divisive partisanship, and awash in an increasingly shallow nationalism, our hope is that *American Routes* can help to build a public discourse that calls on our deeper traditions – cultural sources that can give meaning to our lives, help us make sense of the complexity of creolization and migration, and remind us that tradition and creativity are powerful tools available to all citizens. Our program treatment about “The Authentic Future” suggests a model for how we can – and why we must – call on our understandings of tradition and change in vernacular culture to address the central problems facing our – and any – democracy: how do we balance the *pluribus* and the *unum*? How, together, can we transform the past we have inherited into the future we wish to inhabit?

*American Routes* has been concerned with the future of American cultural expression and democratic pluralism since we began broadcasting in 1998, and we view that final program treatment as a summary statement of our efforts as cultural workers, humanists, and producers during those nearly two decades. With the NEH's support, we hope the program will air on July 4, 2018 – a fine day for the message that in our democracy, pluralism is patriotism.

*By FAR the best show on National Public Radio! Actually, it's an independently-produced program that's presented with love, passion, enthusiasm, and EXCELLENCE. It goes from down home to uptown to downtown to ancient past to passionate present. A true anthropological and anthological musical journey!!* -- Facebook review 2016

### **Creative approach:**

*American Routes'* on-air sound is a balance between interviews/features devoted to culturally significant topics and a carefully sequenced mix (*segues*) of musical selections to support and extend the core ideas with aesthetic approaches to meaning. The focus is on enduring music mostly recorded between the early 1920s and late 1970s, as well as more recent works that clearly refer to, re-create or extend genres and styles from that key period of music creation and recording in our society to present day transformations as well as current re-creations. In any given hour, Spitzer may offer up a soundscape that combines in various proportions: blues, Cajun, jazz, Latin and Caribbean, gospel, Tejano, rockabilly, klezmer and polka, soul, country, pop, avant-garde, roots rock, Broadway or film soundtracks and classical music--all placed in context by interviews, features, and scholars' commentaries. As founding producer and on-air host, Spitzer presents an array of music that expresses both the *pluribus* and the *unum* in American culture, drawing connections between the musical selections and illuminating their

historical, cultural or stylistic relationships. Rather than serving existing audiences for any single kind of music, *American Routes* embraces a wide swath of American musical culture and so explores the boundaries where different genres meet and mingle to create a vivid soundtrack for a socially inclusive and culturally diverse America.

Creatively embracing the new ways media platforms deliver and carry content, our newest offering is a weekly podcast feature called “Short Cuts,” which we provide free to all stations in the system for insert use in *Morning Edition*. At the outset these are 5 minute versions of longer program interviews offered for radio broadcast. They move at the pace of news production for a listener that may be less attuned to cultural content. Stations can use this to promote the airtime of the whole program, or to send listeners to our website for the full-length streaming feature. With funding, we plan to expand these into 15 to 20 minute podcasts to be offered through station websites as well as through iTunes.

**Audience and distribution:**

*Until American Routes came along, I presumed music and intellect were mutually exclusive. Thank you thank you - keep it up PLEASE. -- A listener, Whidbey Island WA*

*This is important, what you do. We need to preserve the good roots and grow them outward. Places of refuge, like American Routes, serve as our greenhouses and incubators. When we tune in, we hear music that keeps us spiritually up above the flood waters. -- a listener, Brattleboro VT*

In its 17 years on the air, *American Routes* has achieved an extraordinary level of endorsement in the public radio system for a longish, eclectic, *sui generis* format. *Routes* was launched nationally with 12 stations in April 1998. Within two months the program was on 35 stations, and by spring 2000 it was on 132 stations reaching 160 communities. As of June 30 2016, *American Routes* reaches over 400 localities via over 300 stations. The program is heard in many of the nation’s top-25 markets, including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, Boston, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Denver, St. Louis and Seattle. It is also broadcast in culturally significant smaller cities like New Orleans, Omaha, Nashville, Tulsa, Ft. Myers, Albany, Columbus (OH), Akron, Rochester (NY), Winston-Salem, Lafayette (LA) and Honolulu, and the state or regional public radio networks in Mississippi, Georgia, Montana, Alabama, New Hampshire, Utah, Oregon, Washington and Vermont among others. Based on Arbitron data from 2012-13 and interpretive research by Schuman Communications of Princeton New Jersey, the above translates into a weekly cumulative audience of up to a range of 750,000 to 1,000,000 listeners across the nation. This contrast to the limited number of network radio programs or services devoted exclusively to vernacular music as valuable culture or cultural content of any kind. *American Routes* remains the only network program committed to presenting the depth, diversity and significance of vernacular American musicians, music and cultures in local, regional and national terms of significance.

*American Routes* is distributed by the Public Radio Exchange (PRX), the nation’s foremost independent public radio distributors. Among PRX’s most widely heard and beloved sister programs with *American Routes* are the *This American Life*, *The Moth Radio Hour*, *L.A. Theater Works*, and *Snap Judgment*. By distributing the program on PRX, *American Routes* is now

accessible to many more community radio stations across the country-- from inner cities and rural towns to Indian Reservations. These are stations that are less able to afford the cost of current public radio distribution systems like Content Depot. As a result, *American Routes* has widened its audience reach while maintaining its position as a premier content program in public media. For example, *American Routes* has increased its presence in California through community radio and also taken advantage of broadcast opportunities on NPR Berlin and NPR Worldwide. In addition, *American Routes* has retained the services of public radio veteran Ken Mills for advice and management in marketing and station relations. Ken Mills and Associates bring decades of experience in marketing for public radio programs as diverse as *Sound Opinions* and *American RadioWorks*, as well as deep understanding of stations needs from years of public radio management.

*American Routes* is carried by stations with widely diverse formats, including news/information, classical, classical/news, eclectic, community-based, and AAA. The latter meaning “adult, acoustic, alternative” and various other iterations, has become an increasingly viable spot for *American Routes*. The growth of “Americana” formats especially has given *Routes* a new places as a more in-depth weekend program that usually live DJ hosted programs that do not provide a similar level of interpretive information. Our recent addition to Sunday afternoons on WXPB in Philadelphia--perhaps the trend setting AAA and Americana station in the country, should aid the trend toward these sorts of stations at a time when larger urban NPR stations are going exclusively to news/talk formats. At the same time, because we work hard on the interpretive dimensions of the program, it is highly compatible with news/ information formats where local programmers accept the idea that music and cultural programs provide listeners with information of a different sort. For that reason, *American Routes* is often placed next to *This American Life*, *Studio 360*, *Fresh Air* or NPR weekend news programs as well as locally produced music and culture programs.

Classical-format stations most often air the program before or after *A Prairie Home Companion* (depending on time zone). Garrison Keillor wrote, “I love *American Routes*. It's just right. It's the show I listen to driving home from work.” (we hope that in retirement he won't have to only listen on his car radio!) *American Routes*' cross-format appeal is rare in the public radio marketplace today. And, it suggests that continued across-the-board audience growth is possible. *Audigraphics* research indicates that *American Routes*' audience--unlike the more significant “graying” in the rest of the NPR audience--has continued to grow by roughly 18-24 per cent per year over the last five years, driven by loyalty, word-of-mouth and national media coverage. With the continued improvement of a website with a 17 years of programs and features available streaming, archival interview suggestions and topical articles, our weekly visitor traffic and weekly e-mail sign-up has increased dramatically.

The continued specialization and segmentation of public radio station formats make the still growing audiences and carriage list for *American Routes* even more remarkable. Fewer and fewer stations permit themselves to air a mix of musical styles, preferring instead to specialize in a single format of music or increasingly, news & information. That a program as eclectic and interpretive as *American Routes* is carried by so many stations in spite of these trends testifies to the reliable quality of the content and production over the years, its appeal to a broad range of listeners, and the respect program directors and stations have for its producers. The proposed

“Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story & Song” programming will enhance the standing of *American Routes* with those news/talk or classical stations that air vernacular music and cultural content only when framed by interpretive information from a humanities perspective. Enhancement of the humanities content provides these stations with a method of exegesis that sounds familiar to public radio’s information programs, while treating music in a less familiar format but with the capacity to engage an audience more deeply on an array of issues embedded in culture and cultural expression as performance and entertainment.

The public radio audience is less diverse ethnically than the U.S. population. However, while African-Americans make up only a small percentage of the *American Routes* audience, they listen with a greater degree of loyalty by far than all but elderly listeners of all backgrounds. Data for Hispanics is encouraging: despite the small overall number of Hispanic listeners, their listenership has grown steadily. *American Routes*’ press and promotional efforts all emphasize the high percentage of African-American and Latino music, musicians, interviews, and cultural features in the program. The “loyalty to program” data suggests, especially for blacks, that if people know about the program they will support it and listen to it for more total time than nearly all other categories assessed. Julian Bond, longtime supporter of the program and who uses it in his classes at the University of Virginia, has written that *American Routes* “consistently presents a wider array of African American music and culture than any other program in public radio.” While we cannot completely change the face of public radio listenership, *American Routes* should be able to make a contribution to enhancing that audience’s diversity.

As the worlds of broadcast radio and podcasting converge, *American Routes* wants to ensure that younger listeners and listeners on the go have access to our cultural content. According to a 2016 Edison Research study, 1 in 4 Americans polled had listened to a podcast in the past month. The same study found that monthly podcast listenership has grown 75% since 2013. Most listeners download episodes onto a smartphone or tablet.

We are developing a weekly podcasts called “Short Cuts” for uploaded through on iTunes, and available on all major podcast subscription platforms like iTunes, Stitcher, and Spotify. We are distributing a short teaser to our partner stations for broadcast that will generate interest in the podcast and give instructions for how to subscribe and download once it is available. We will also advertise using social media platforms Facebook and Twitter.

Press coverage remains an essential way for any program to reach new and larger audiences, and *American Routes* has successfully attracted coverage in major articles in *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Billboard*, as well numerous instances of local press. Post-Hurricane Katrina, host Nick Spitzer was featured both in print and on *Fresh Air*, NPR's *All Things Considered*, ABC's *World News Tonight* and *Nightline*, and the BBC's *World Today* as a cultural commentator on the current state and cultural future of New Orleans and the region. In Louisiana, a lengthy interview with him on the philosophical basis and program plans for *American Routes* was published in the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities magazine, *Louisiana Cultural Vistas*. Spitzer has also been involved in many local community discussions and has lectured widely at colleges, universities and academic societies (including Emory, Penn, Columbia, Brown, University of North Carolina, Yale, Vanderbilt, Society for Ethnomusicology, Bowdoin College, Utah State and others) over the last several years, discussing the role of music and related festival forms, as well as he radio program, in rebuilding New Orleans--and broadly

American--culture and community life. In 2006 he co-authored a book with folklorist Roger Abrahams and jazz scholar John Szwed entitled *Blues for New Orleans: Mardi Gras and America's Creole Soul*. He also wrote the liner notes and produced sessions for the highly regarded *Our New Orleans: A Benefit Album* (Nonesuch Records) devoted to New Orleans and area musicians recorded post-Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, as a fundraiser for Habitat for Humanity's "Musicians' Village" and other regional recovery efforts. An influential article "Rebuilding the 'Land of Dreams' with Music" was published in *Rebuilding Urban Places After Disaster: Lessons from Hurricane Katrina* (2006). In 2008, the two CD set "[American Routes: Songs and Stories from the Road](#)" was issued by Highbridge Audio as a 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary document of some of our greatest interviews and features—many of them from programs originally funded by the NEH which is prominently credited on the work. Recently he has been writing and publishing essays on cultural creolization and creativity, as well as the future of vernacular cultures for a variety of journals and collections of essays. Spitzer has also advanced vernacular cultural diplomacy in bringing New Orleans traditional jazz, cowboy songs, Cajun music and gospel "sacred steel" music to China at local festivals, clubs, university and American consulates.

Spitzer remains a key voice in discussion of New Orleans and the Gulf South recovery 2005-2015 including a new film "Only in New Orleans" by Arte Network (French/German collaboration) in which he is the primary commentator. In recent years his work has also been featured from *China Daily News*, and the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy (Berlin) magazine, to the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, *National Endowment for the Humanities Magazine* and the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*.

With tens of thousands of visits each month the [American Routes website](#) has become a destination site for serious students of American music and culture, as well as the general public. By combining a listenable full archive with photographs and in-depth playlist information, and by extending the reach and depth of the program through the utilization of new media and social networking technologies, we have started the process of integrating education and conversation into both how people approach the program as well as how we as producers conceptualize it. Many college and high school teachers use the website in the courses on American history and culture, music, community life and folklore.

Through our partnership with the New Orleans public radio station at the University of New Orleans, WWNO, we have been able to address a longstanding concern of our listeners: the ability to listen to the full program and individual artist interviews on demand. WWNO's legal status as a public radio station under the Corporation for Public Broadcasting rules has finally allowed us as a program producer to "stream" all content. Presently, we are exploring ways to provide downloadable podcasts under a broad licensing agreement. Requests for a regular podcast make up a large share of comments from our listeners; however, since podcast end-users legally take possession of a copy of the program, the nature of our productions does not currently permit such access. Therefore, we would need to put a licensing agreement in place first, as well as provide for increases in network bandwidth. One item that will make the full archive of the program more widely available is the development an iPhone application. At the present moment, we have enabled a mobile web version of our website which allows the program to be streamed both from iPhones and Android devices. We have budgeted for a larger application presence in

the current proposal as we seek a variety of new platforms and outlets through which to reach listeners.

The website, which debuted in January 2009, offers over 750 individual programs and more than 800 artist interviews and produced field recordings—for 1,500 hours of publically-accessible streaming audio—integrates program audio with show and segment descriptions, photographs, song playlists and a superior search feature, enabling users to immediately access information from throughout the *American Routes* archive. Over the course of just a few months, the number of visitors to the new website has increased exponentially. For the month of July 2013 alone, the website had nearly 15,000 visitors now listening to the program online. We have ventured into producing additional web-based content for example on the [“After the Storm”](#) series, which explores the dominant cultural theme exposed by the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath: that culture and performance, and the examination thereof, are integral to the recovery of a community, and are vitally applicable to the current national climate of distress. In August 2015 with a decade passed since the Katrina Flood a final 13<sup>th</sup> After the Storm program aired with website set of links to earlier programs and related activities via social media. The focus was New Orleans today caught between recovery and gentrification forces

All the linked websites allow listeners to engage more deeply with our current program and archival audio content. The website is also equipped with social networking share links per show, which add more accessibility to its contextual and educational fabric.

Additionally, we continually work with Tulane University colleagues to contribute to in-depth scholarly websites that intertwine thematically with *American Routes* programming (see [musicrising.tulane.edu](http://musicrising.tulane.edu)). The proposed series of ten programs “Exploring and Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story and Song,” will be folded into the weekly [americanroutes.org](http://americanroutes.org) website, and will also have a separate section describing the thematic and practice approaches we are taking, and the results in programs and their impact. Our website, maintained and directed by *American Routes* staff with the assistance of Tulane University students, will incorporate student and faculty research, field recordings and photography created by *American Routes* as well as links to additional resources, allowing educators and researchers deeper access to our programs. One recent example is *American Routes* audio feature on the [Prince of Wales Social Aid and Pleasure Club](#) that emerged as a model in part from a class project, being repurposed as highly visual and in-depth oral history web feature. Tulane University has already provided *American Routes* with the platform and training to create the websites, which will also be linked to the main *American Routes* webpage. The Canary Collective, a New Orleans design studio and webhosting firm, designed and maintains the primary *American Routes* website, and provides storage space and uninterrupted network connectivity. Though *American Routes* staff create and upload show audio and playlists, as well as related multimedia content, technical representatives of Canary work on a contract basis with in-house staff to maintain the functionality of the complex site, as well as implement new services and features. We intend to expand both the depth and reach of our website and its use at Tulane, other colleges and universities as well as mutual links to the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities’ <http://www.knowla.org/> for a specific statewide public, and have we have budgeted for same.

## **Project evaluation**

*American Routes is a journey in every sense of the word. Following in the steps of folklorist Alan Lomax, there are few programs on the airwaves that dive as deep into the undercurrents of American music. Nick connects this country's musical dots, lifting the veil behind our sonic traditions to explain how the guitar work of Chuck Berry and Link Wray brings us to the Black Keys some fifty years later.*

-- Future of Music Coalition, Policy Fellow Daniel Lieberman (2012)

*American Routes* currently employs a wide variety of evaluative tools in order to discern audience reach and impact. A recent Arbitron survey gave us a sense of cume, top station markets, and audience demographics. We also monitor our website traffic and usage through Google analytics. These are quantitative evaluations. For a more qualitative view, we rely on listener feedback via email or our social media outlets, such as Facebook and, Twitter. For this new *American Routes* series, we intend to further explore the educational impact and reach of the program by retaining a program consultant who will build and monitor effect methods of evaluation, which may include listener focus groups, email surveys and station interviews. We hope that the results of such in-depth evaluations will assist *American Routes* in future program production and provide additional strength of the program's content and listenership.

## **Rights and permissions:**

*American Routes* content is broadcast terrestrially locally and streams worldwide from our website americanroutes.org Rights to music in this arrangement are guaranteed under a Corporation for Public Broadcasting agreement with ASCAP and BMI that covers public media. All interviews and performances recorded by *American Routes* are covered by verbal recorded permission or written agreements. *American Routes* also carries one million in Errors and Omissions Insurance with the Walthery Insurance Co.

## **Humanities advisors:**

**National advisors** comment broadly on the *American Routes*' goals, objectives, rhetorical position and sound as a network public radio program. They also comment on selected specific programs or themes.

**Dr. William Ferris** -- Folklorist and professor of history and Southern studies at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Advises on "Blues and Healing," "Bessie Smith" and "The Authentic Future" programs.

**Dr. Andy Horowitz** -- Assistant Professor of History at Tulane University with expertise in modern American political, cultural, and environmental history; oral history; American popular culture (music); urban studies; and cultural conservation. Advises on "This Land Is Your Land: American Environmental History in Song," "Streetscapes," and "The Authentic Future" programs.

**Dr. Elizabeth Peterson** -- folklorist and director of the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. "Advises on "The Authentic Future" and "Crooked Roads Home" programs.

**Dr. Bruce Raeburn** -- Director of Special Collections, Head of the Hogan Jazz Archives adjunct professor of history at Tulane University. Advises on "Angola Bound," "Blues and Healing," "Bessie Smith/Mahalia Jackson" programs.

**Dr. Daniel Sheehy** -- Ethnomusicologist with specialty in Latin American music; Director emeritus, Center for Folklife Studies and Cultural Heritage at the Smithsonian Institution; Curator of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.

**Dr. John Szwed** -- Folklorist, cultural critic and jazz historian, Columbia University (emeritus Yale University). Advises on “Blues and Healing,” “Bessie Smith/Mahalia Jackson,” “The Authentic Future,” and “Sound Visionaries,” programs.

**Dr. Michael White** -- traditional jazz clarinetist and Keller Chair Professor in the Humanities, Xavier University of New Orleans. Advises on African American cultural themes, creativity, improvisation and spiritual aspects of performance with special regard to NEH programs devoted to blues, jazz and African American artists.

**Program advisors** comment primarily on specific radio program’s content and realization as they evolve from treatments.

**Dr. Robert Baron** --Folklorist at Goucher College and New York culture specialist -- advises on “Music as Cultural Identity in NYC: The Sound of Pluralism.”

**Dr. Benjamin Habert** – Assistant Professor of Music at Georgetown University will advise on “Angola Bound” prison songs and narratives.

**Dr. Glenda Gilmore** – Peter V and C Vann Woodward Professor of History, Professor of African American Studies, and Professor of American Studies at Yale University, will advise on “Sound Visionaries,” and “The Authentic Future” programs.

**Dr. Henry Glassie** -- Professor of Folklore at Indiana University will advise on “The Authentic Future.”

**Dr. Joyce Marie Jackson** -- Professor of anthropology and director African and African American studies, adjunct professor of women’s and gender studies at Louisiana State University. She advises on biographic programs on “Bessie Smith and Mahalia Jackson,” “Blues and Healing” and on “Angola Bound” programs.

**Dr. Richard Kurin** – Deputy Secretary for Museums, Arts and Cultures, Smithsonian Institution. Comments on “The Authentic Future.”

**Debra Lattanzi Shutika** -- Folklorist and Chairman of English at George Mason University, advises on “Crooked Roads Home” program.

**Dr. Maureen Loughran** -- Ethnomusicologist, Center for Traditional Music and Dance, NYC. Will advise on “Music as Cultural Identity in NYC: The Sound of Pluralism.”

**Dr. Donald Worster** -- Hall Distinguished Professor of American History, Emeritus, at University of Kansas will advise on American environmental history and the perception of nature in the program “This Land Is Your Land: American Environmental History in Song.”

**Dr. Steve Zeitlin** -- Director of City Lore. Advises on “Music as Cultural Identity in NYC: The Sound of Pluralism.”

*Advisors letters and brief résumé give much greater detail. Indeed they have already helped shape this proposal.*

#### **Media team:**

The entire *American Routes* team will be involved in the development and production of “*American Routes: Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story & Song*” under the direction of executive producer and host Dr. Nick Spitzer. Principal team members are listed below. All in New Orleans unless otherwise noted (Attachment 7 – *resumes and letters*).



- **Nick Spitzer, Ph.D.** - executive producer and host of *American Routes* and professor of anthropology, Tulane University
- **Matt Sakakeeny, Ph.D.** (ethnomusicology)- senior contributing producer
- **Maureen Loughran, Ph.D.** - (ethnomusicology) Senior contributing producer
- **Jason Rhein** -- technical director
- **Garrett Pittman, M.A.** (history) - managing producer
- **Andy Horowitz, Ph.D.** (history) - contributing producer
- **Gwendolyn Thompkins** - contributing producer (New Orleans)
- **Margaret Howze** - senior contributing producer
- **Emily Botein** - senior contributing producer, New York
- **Ken Mills** - director of station relations and program marketing, Minneapolis
- **Lauren Callihan** - program development associate
- **Thomas Walsh** -- assistant producer for oral histories
- **Elena Martínez** -- field producer (New York City)
- **Olivia Broslowsky** - production assistant (graduate student, ethnomusicology)
- **Tyler Michael** - production assistant (undergraduate in anthropology)
- **Gregory LeBlanc** - production assistant (undergraduate in anthropology)

*American Routes* is now in 2016 in the middle of its 17<sup>th</sup> year on air. The series for which we are applying will not commence until FY 2017-18. However we have already begun to do some of the interviews in hopes that funds will be provided and because certain events on the calendar and the availability of many artists and humanists is limited. This is partly true because we interview many older people to record their voices and narratives while it is possible. To create the treatments for this proposal we've done some preliminary field and library research as well as interviews and field records. Inevitably a proposal grows from topics we learn about--usually from humanities scholars, our own research, or interviews with an artist that suggest a direction we might pursue. In proposing treatments a degree of preproduction and production is inevitably.

Serious research, field travel, interviewing, editorial and production work cannot begin until and unless the proposal is funded. NEH support, if granted, will ensure that *American Routes* has the resources to involve multiple humanities experts fundamentally in the planning, research and interview stages of the new programming as well as in actual production. It will also make it possible to record audio material with additional artists and commentators.

### **Progress:**

*American Routes* is a weekly on going project. As noted this specific proposal builds on well-developed approaches to representation with new content. The primary advance work that has been done involves interviews that have already been done: in Appalachian Virginia, with blues musicians, culture critics, humanist, singer-songwriters. New interviews and interviews from our archives each comprise about 5% respectively of planned total for the 2017-18 NEH series. They are 10% of the total (see below "Preliminary Interviews").

In crafting this application and plan, much time is spent reviewing written sources and available media and other recordings. Talking to potential humanities advisors also helps advance the plan that can be put into action. It allows us to hear about research needed, travel required, artists to

track down and additional humanities commentators--especially those who are the native intelligentsia or vernacular humanists at the community level. With NEH support we can build upon what has been done and planned to create and fulfill that topical programs summarized in the proposal.

**Work plan:**

*One of the coolest programs on radio... an open-ended tale of discovery--musical and otherwise. (Paul de Barros, Seattle Intelligencer)*

Should support be awarded by the NEH, work on "Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story & Song" programming would formally begin on April 1, 2017 and continue through the grant period until December 31, 2018. The work schedule and exact airdates will depend on the availability of interview subjects and location of the programs within the larger *American Routes* broadcast schedule. The NEH credit airs on all programs in both hours, and is on the website, all print media, and all e-mail announcements. Producing a weekly broadcast--as opposed to a single freestanding documentary project--requires that *American Routes* staff work on various programs and features simultaneously, in different stages of completion. For the proposed programming, we project a four-month schedule from beginning to broadcast, broken down as follows.

At least three months prior to broadcast, each feature/program is discussed with humanities advisors who comment on topics, music and additional voices to include. Research program begins, with the *American Routes* editor amassing written and musical sources from these suggestions. When interviewees are chosen, a program assistant begins working to secure an interview date/time. When the person is outside of New Orleans or the surrounding area, we book time at a local public radio studio, or contract with an engineer for a tape sync interview, avoiding use of "telephone audio." Following the interviews of humanities scholars, artists, and community members, which are done within two months prior to broadcast, a program assistant prepares full transcripts of each interview. The producer, contributing producer, or associate producer does a "paper edit" to identify content to consider for inclusion. Interviews are then loaded into the digital editing system (Pro-Tools), and a rough assembly of the piece is performed from the paper edit. Music selection and research continue concurrently. After rough assembly of features to be included, a script is written, consulting the original plan for, taking into account the input from advisors and the quality of the interviews and available music.

Within the final month prior to broadcast, when all research is completed, interviews transcribed and edited, rough assembly completed and script written, the host records his narrative and commentaries around the interviewee's comments and music selections. Once the script is "tracked," the producer works with a senior contributing producer and co-producers, managing producer and technical director on final assembly, edit and mix. These elements are then made a part of a larger program with appropriate theme and musical selections. A finished program is converted to mp2 and uploaded to the PRX secure network web portal. *American Routes* feeds to carrying stations nationwide Wednesdays at 1100 EST. Once a program is completed, a production assistant puts it onto the website along with a playlist of musical selections for the full program, related visuals and suggestions for further listening and reading. These published sources are often suggested by our humanities advisors and may sometimes include their work.

We will produce and broadcast a new program from this series every 7 weeks beginning in May 2017. Once all are completed, we will conduct an audience survey to gauge the appeal of the series to the public and whether the series achieved its goal of distributing information and understanding about the topics.

**Fundraising plan:**

Should NEH support be awarded for FY 2017-18, *American Routes* is prepared to provide match through a variety of sources. We expect to be awarded funding from the State of Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, the Louisiana Department of Economic Development and a variety of small underwriters for particular programs. To make up anticipated budget shortfalls, we are seeking additional underwriting from foundations and appropriate private companies, including the New Orleans Convention and Visitor's Bureau, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, the Grammy Foundation and others. We have begun, with some early promise, to use the *American Routes* website to go directly to listeners for support--as is becoming the new model in public radio. Tulane University has also assisted by funding the creation of a radio studio and archives on campus and provides many in-kind services including a rotating group of student workers. Spitzer is able to devote 25% of his time to the humanities series programming on *American Routes*.

**Organization profile:**

**Tulane University** -- Since fall 2008 Nick Spitzer has served as professor of anthropology at Tulane (<http://tulane.edu/>). The Alcée Fortier Studios were constructed on campus in an historic 1923 building and since March of 2009 have served as the management, production and archival base for *American Routes*. Tulane has brought new colleagues and interest in the program with faculty from an array of departments who work on vernacular music and culture of New Orleans/French Louisiana, the US South, America as a whole, the Caribbean, Latin America (including Brazil) and media in society. Tulane's engagement of music, culture and humanities issues has increased with the 2011 opening of the New Orleans Center for the Gulf South--formerly the Deep South Humanities Center--closed after Katrina's devastation--and the creation of a new undergraduate special major devoted to history and culture of the Gulf South underwritten by support from the Gibson Foundation's "Music Rising" project. Tulane University also houses the Hogan Jazz Archive -- known worldwide for their collection of oral histories and sound recordings (Director of Hogan archives and Head of Special Collections for Tulane libraries, Dr. Bruce Raeburn has long been a key humanities advisor to the program). Nick Spitzer uses *American Routes* content in his anthropology courses: "The Interview--Cultural Conversation as Cultural Conservation," "Ethnography of Performance and Identities in New Orleans and the Gulf South" and "Creoles and Cultural Creolization." We continually include undergraduates through service learning projects both in research and production support for the Hogan Jazz Archives and *American Routes*.

***American Routes*** -- *American Routes* is the weekly, two-hour nationally distributed public radio program devoted to songs and stories, humanist and artist narratives, that explore humanities and aesthetic issues in American society and culture through the expression of vernacular music. Produced in New Orleans and housed at Tulane, each *American Routes* program presents a wide range of music and musicians woven around a theme or series of related humanities topics that

also extend to other programs. American Routes is hosted by folklorist and documentary producer Nick Spitzer--also a professor of cultural anthropology at Tulane University.

### **List of collections of materials to be used by the project**

To create "Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story & Song," the producers will draw upon multiple audio resource collections. The *American Routes* archival holdings include 15,000 CDs; 1,500 LPs, and hundreds of significant 45, and 78 rpm recordings; over 2,000 hours of field and studio interviews and oral histories with American musicians, artists, community leaders, critics, scholars, and others. These represent Spitzer's over 35 years of field documentary work as well as studio-based conversations. On August 28, 2005, most of this collection escaped serious hurricane, flood or humidity damage. For this proposed series the *American Routes* Collections archival interviews we will use to augment what is 90% new record interviews are listed below. These are essential where interviewees have passed on, are no longer in their prime, or are extremely difficult to get for a new interview.

Additional resources include relevant collections at Tulane: Tilton Memorial Library's Louisiana Collection as well as the noted Hogan Jazz Archives, and Amistad Research Center collections of African-American history and culture. We also engage with the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, and the Louisiana Special Collections at the Earl K. Long Library of the University of New Orleans. Of growing interest to us are the music and oral history archives at The Historic New Orleans Collection and the Louisiana State Museum.

Special music and cultural collections to be accessed outside New Orleans include the Country Music Foundation and Museum in Nashville, City Lore in New York City, the Center for American Music at the University of Texas-Austin, the Southern Folklore Collection at the University of North Carolina, the Folkways Archives at the Smithsonian Institution, the Archive of Folk Culture at the Library of Congress, the Archives of African-American Music and Culture at Indiana University and the Arhoolie Foundation Collection in El Cerrito, California. All appropriate rights to music and other recorded material for broadcast, satellite radio distribution or Internet use, are covered under the ASCAP/BMI agreement with the public radio and television networks.

### **Preliminary interviews**

Kitty Amaral, young Appalachian fiddler  
Angola inmates who are musicians  
Dori Freeman, young Appalachian singer  
Wayne Henderson, luthier and old-time country guitarist  
Bess Lomax Hawes, folksinger and folklorist  
B.B. King, late blues guitarist  
Little Freddie King, blues composer song and guitarist  
Alan Lomax, late folklorist and documentarian  
Albert Murray, late African American culture critic  
Charles Neville, New Orleans saxophonist and former Angola inmate  
Taj Mahal, blues performer  
KoKo Taylor, late blues singer  
The late Joe Wilson, folklorist and Appalachian community organizer

## **Attachment 3**

### ***American Routes***

**Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story & Song**

### **Treatments**

## “This Land Is Your Land”: American Environmental History in Song

“The land and sea, the animals, fishes, and birds, the sky of heaven and the orbs, the forests, mountains, and rivers are not small themes.”

-Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

This *American Routes* program will survey the American landscape in song, exploring how relationships between nature and culture have both shaped and been shaped by American vernacular traditions. Building from iconic evocations of natural scenes such as Woody Guthrie’s anthemic “This Land Is Your Land,” which lyrically summons America’s “diamond deserts,” “wheat fields waving,” and “dust clouds rolling,” this first *American Routes* program devoted to the environment and environmentalism will explore how Americans have defined themselves in relation to the world around them – “from the redwood forest to the Gulf Stream waters.” As climate change prompts many to grapple with the moral bases of capitalism, the legitimacy of state action, and the processes of change itself, this program will focus in particular on how American communities past and present have made sense of changing climates and environmental challenges.

For American singers and storytellers, the environment has always been much more than just a muse. Heeding cultural theorist Raymond Williams’ caution that “the idea of nature contains, though often unnoticed, an extraordinary amount of human history,” *American Routes* will not treat natural images in songs as simple representations, but rather as cultural arguments with high stakes. The program will use environmental history to interrogate how people live in and with the world around them. Under the banner of environment, therefore, our program will consider capitalism, colonialism, democracy, the industrial revolution, wilderness, race, class, gender, justice, and climate change. To help us with these complex and interrelated realms, our humanities advisor is **Dr. Andy Horowitz**, an historian at Tulane University who studies political and cultural responses to environmental change. He will assist us as we explore how changing ideas about nature and the environment have given rise to migrations, adaptations, innovations, and political protest movements, from the transcendentalists in the 1830s through Earth Day in 1970 and contemporary calls for environmental justice today. Dr. Horowitz, who first advised *American Routes* while doing oral history work in post-Katrina New Orleans, will also assist in research, scripting, and music selection.

The four-part program will open by examining how the American landscape tradition’s romance with nature found its way into American song. “The American poet,” Walt Whitman wrote, “responds to his country’s spirit...he incarnates its geography and natural life and rivers and lakes.” Beginning in the early nineteenth century, artists, writers, and intellectuals like the painter Thomas Cole used representations of the landscape to define what was American about America. To Cole and the long tradition that followed him, including Whitman, America’s answer to Europe’s iconic cathedrals and ruins were its mountains and deserts. *American Routes* will explore how American songwriters have drawn from this tradition – with reference to works such as Russian immigrant Irving Berlin’s “Blue Skies,” Aaron Copeland’s “Appalachian Spring,” Ferde Grofé’s “Grand Canyon Suite,” and contemporary guitarist William Tyler’s “Modern

Country.” Purposely blurring the common distinction the natural and the manmade, the program will pair paeans to “purple mountain majesties” and “old man river” with investigations of the environmental histories of America’s cities too, featuring songs and commentary that evoke life “Dancing in the Street,” as Martha and the Vandellas put it, “Up On The Roof,” as the Drifters sang, and “Down By the Riverside,” in the refrain of the beloved spiritual.

The program’s second segment will build on this iconic environmental lyrical lexicon, foregrounding how American communities past and present have faced floods, droughts, heat waves, pollution, and other environmental challenges in visceral, social, and aesthetic terms. We will focus especially on how artists like Woody Guthrie and other less heralded singers, often black and white sharecroppers, responded to the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. Esteemed historian **Donald Worster**, a Kansas native and author of *The Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (1979), will help guide us through the complex interrelationships of economics, environment, and connection to place that shaped the lives of Plains residents as they struggled to tough it out in the Dust Bowl or decided, as one common verse put it, to go “where the climate suits my clothes.” Worster, who has also written a celebrated biography of pioneering environmentalist John Muir, *A Passion for Nature: The Life of John Muir* (2008), along with many other influential works of environmental history, will also help our listeners understand how longstanding cultural distinctions between labor and leisure have shaped the way Americans understand the environment.

The third segment will focus on Earth Day in 1970 as the linchpin moment in the modern environmental movement. Here the program will highlight Pete Seeger’s lifework to clean the Hudson River, drawing from archival *American Routes* interviews and Seeger’s seminal 1966 environmental concept album *God Bless the Grass*. The segment will also feature Marvin Gaye’s 1971 album *What’s Going On*, which drew connections between “The Ecology” and “Inner City Blues,” corresponding with a rising attention to racial concerns in the burgeoning movement for what soon would be called environmental justice. We will be assisted by the renowned landscape architect **Laurie Olin**, an associate of Ian McHarg (*Design with Nature*, 1969), and others who planned or performed at a seminal environmental activist celebration in Philadelphia’s Fairmount Park, including members of Kronos, the cast of *Hair*, the Native American band Redbone, and the Sun Ra Arkestra.

The fourth and final segment will bring the story through to the present to show how contemporary artists are updating these longstanding traditions to address current concerns. Folk revival banjo player Abigail Washburn draws on the story of Noah’s flood to think about the threat posed by rising seas in “Whatcha Gonna Do When The Land Goes Under The Water?,” for example, and Francophone Cajun rockers Lost Bayou Ramblers put the 2010 BP oil spill in the context of Louisiana’s long experience with hurricanes in “Marée Noir” (“Black Marsh”). This concluding segment is meant to weave together the threads of the program as a whole, encouraging listeners to understand the many ways that environmental history is human history; and that the challenges posed by

climate change are not primarily about the weather, but rather involve the most profound questions long considered by artists, writers, and scholars of the humanities.



## Blues and Healing

The blues tradition transforms pain into pleasure. This *American Routes* program will explore how the remarkable ability to serve as both downbeat meditation and upbeat dance music has made the blues one of the great aesthetic contributions to American culture – and set the beat for the march toward freedom by African Americans and all people, in the United States and around the globe, who seek joy and relief in the music.

This thematic program builds on the work of the late African American cultural critic Albert Murray and his idea that the capacity of the blues aesthetic to turn trouble and sorrow into joy by stating the emotional pain and dancing to it – what he called *Stomping the Blues* (1976) with the intended double meaning of dancing to and beating the blues – was a particular contribution to American music and culture. “I didn’t think... a culture [should] be understood as the sum total of its suffering,” Murray asserted, “but the blues is a brilliant way to transcend the pain in life that is real.”

The program will survey how African Americans developed the blues form from a mix of call-and-response field hollers and work songs, as well as dance music in rural agrarian places of entertainment: house parties, juke joints and picnics. With roots in the West African griot tradition of praise and social criticism, and employing an array of string instruments like the *kora*, *halam* and *riiti*, the blues largely emerged in the Mississippi Delta in the late nineteenth century. Influenced by various Senegambian ethnicities and Islamic scales, African American artists adapted what are now considered “blue notes” to one-string diddley bows, cigar box guitars and fiddles, and later to store-bought guitars, harmonicas, and pianos.

The bluesman was often both trickster and hero in the poorest communities of the post-emancipation South, and blues became back drop to hard times, love lost and found, and both the freedom and challenge of life on the road. Blues became known as the secular music of Saturday night, with stylistic ties to but social separation from gospel as the sacred church music of Sunday morning. While maintaining ties to the “holy blues” (cf. Pops Staples) or gospel and other sacred forms of the black church, the music has been a fundamental building block in jazz, country music, R & B, soul and rock n’ roll. Its common lyrical themes – including tales of mistreating women, a cruel boss, or better life down the road – have pervaded American popular culture.

In addition to our in-depth interview with **Albert Murray** at his Harlem apartment about the blues as a healing force, we look at the history of blues as a term in British public hospitals of the seventeenth century, where “blue devils” was a conditional diagnosis of the depressed and despondent. We will survey plantation diarists who used “blues” as a descriptive term for enslaved people, along with songs that describe blues as a physical condition, a spiritual presence (as in the line, “Woke up

this morning, blues all around my bed”), and an ongoing conversation (as in “Good Morning Blues....”). We will draw from advertisements in African American newspapers, such as the *Chicago Defender*, which in the 1920-40s sometimes described the blues becoming physically manifest – for example as a snake that inhabits the bed of an anxious sleepless person, or a devil figure that observes a male and female couple in conflict.

We will offer listeners, too, diverse musical accounts of the blues at once as an emotional state of mind, and as a therapeutic recuperation. The broader blues aesthetic provided a form of self-diagnosis through narrative. Albert Murray and other of our interviewees describe how public performance in jukes and on recordings offered a way to express maladies in song, to dance to the expression, and own them. We will listen to these performances knowing, as our humanities advisor and jazz/blues critic John Szwed has asserted, that vernacular music “is the best archive of what [historical actors] were enduring, experiencing, thinking, and dreaming.”

For this program, we will call on life stories of blues men and women from our archives of narrative about blues including **B.B. King, KoKo Taylor, Buddy Guy, Little Freddie King** and others. We will offer historical and cultural context for the mordant irony about health and fatalism in songs like “I Had My Fun (If I Don’t Get Well No More)” in the work of performers including Howlin’ Wolf, Lightnin’ Hopkins, Henry Gray, Champion Jack Dupree, and Ray Charles.

In something of a departure from the usual *American Routes* format, we may also offer listeners a memoir from the program’s producer and host Nick Spitzer, who has personal experience with the efficacy of blues as a healing force. In 1980, he spent 6 months in Baton Rouge General Hospital with what had been diagnosed as likely terminal cancer. When local bluesmen Tabby Thomas (guitar) and Moses “Whispering” Smith (harmonica) came to his hospice room for a cheer-up visit and serenade late one evening, they asked what he’d like to hear. Spitzer’s response was, “On the Dark Road Crying,” a song by Whispering Smith that used his booming voice to deliver the existential suffering in the lyrics to full effect. “And after that sing ‘Going Down Slow,’” the patient growled. Thomas and Smith looked at one another sheepishly, voiced minor protest and, after Spitzer repeated his wish, “Sing it ...please gentlemen,” they complied. Months later—when he left the hospital cancer free—the musicians told him, “We did it like it was your last wish.” “I thought it might have been,” was the reply.

Spitzer went on to co-found the Baton Rouge Blues Festival the following year, and since then continued to work closely with blues musicians in film and radio documentaries, scholarly essays, field surveys, and as a record producer for Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. Spitzer will account for the role the blues has had in his own life. In doing so, he will draw from his essay, forthcoming in the 2017 *Proceedings of the American Clinical and Climatological Association*, and from presentations he has made with his oncologist Frederic T. Billings about the cultural

affect of blues expression as a potential healing form of narrative in the art and science of medicine.

In addition to **John Szwed**, humanities advisors are: **William Ferris**, whose work *Give My Poor Heart Ease: Voices of the Mississippi Blues* (2009) addresses the statements of blues singers regarding relief of their condition through composition and performance; and **Dr. Michael White**, jazz clarinetist and Keller Chair in the Humanities at Xavier University, who has long been interested in spiritual and healing aspects of jazz, blues and gospel music.

## **Bessie Smith & Mahalia Jackson** **“Empress of the Blues” and the “Queen of Gospel”**

This *American Routes* program focuses on two extraordinary women singers – Ma Rainey and Mahalia Jackson – in order to better comprehend the intersecting cultural realities of race, class, and gender.

During the 1920s, women were the sirens and empresses of “classic blues,” a genre that expressed the desires, fears, hopes, and troubles of a newly migrant African American culture. Their popularity, and the cultural demands of the genre, enabled classic blues singers greater freedom than many other African American women to share openly about their lives. Singers like Ma Rainey spent years working in tent shows like the Rabbit Foot Minstrels that traveled around the South, before the recording industry spread her fame to Northern cities. In the North, the blues signified the familiar sound of home, and addressed the topics of life away from home. The blues offered nostalgia mixed with a sense that someone understood your current troubles. As the historian Daphne Duval Harrison notes, the blues expressed the black experience in America, and women blues singers spoke directly to the black female experience at the time. She writes:

They transformed their personal feelings into artistic expression, which bonded them to other black women, by skillfully mixing the ingredients of heartbreak and joy to create the songs that caused thousands of black people to flock to their shows and to buy their recordings. Through blues, these women became the principal spokespersons for black women in the North and the South. (Harrison 1988: 9)

Following in Ma Rainey’s footsteps (but actually preceding her with a record contract), the “Empress of the Blues” **Bessie Smith** (1894-1937) challenged the constraints of her gender, race, and historical context with songs like “Young Woman’s Blues,” in which she proclaims “I’m as good as any woman in your town/I ain’t no high yella, I’m a deep killer brown/I ain’t gonna marry, ain’t gon’ to settle down/I’m gonna drink good moonshine and run these browns down.” Smith is declaring her independence from a society that would certainly frown on the sentiments in her lyrics – and is asserting that though she will “drink good moonshine,” she is just “as good as any woman in your town.”

Opening up a space to talk about how lives were really lived, the blues of Bessie Smith was not only a reflection of women’s lives, but also of working class culture and life in the 1920s. As the feminist historian Angela Davis points out, the blues is a working class form that allowed for the development of the individual out of a community. For women, she writes, “the blues was a privileged site in which women were free to assert themselves publicly as sexual beings” (Davis 1998: 46). This was in opposition to the dominant middle-class values that constructed womanhood as chaste homebound creatures who demurely consented to the

authority of male opinion and power. With the onset of the Great Depression at the end of the 1920s, however, record labels shifted their commercial focus from female to male singers. The record companies increasingly presented the women they did record as “torch singers” and eventually “jazz singers,” labels that limited the singers’ free expression.

We will interview biographer **Chris Albertson**, whose work *Bessie* (1972) has been periodically updated and remains definitive. Jazz clarinetist and Xavier University Humanities Chair **Dr. Michael White** and **Dr. Bruce Raeburn** of Tulane Jazz Archives will also advise on the program.

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Gospel queen **Mahalia Jackson** was born in New Orleans in 1911. She moved to Chicago at 16, and worked as a domestic and a beautician before building a national reputation as a gospel singer on the basis of her powerful contralto voice and commanding presence with songs like “How I Got Over,” “Move on Up a Little Higher” and “Roll Jordan Roll.” While Jackson’s early years singing as a member of New Orleans’ Mt. Mariah Baptist Church in the Uptown riverside neighborhood called the Black Pearl is little recognized in local public consciousness, her role in gospel music’s national popularity is analogous to Louis Armstrong’s place in the pantheon of jazz -- so much so that Duke Ellington wrote a tribute piece to her in the *New Orleans Suite*. Her national firsts include a gospel program at the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival and singing “How I Got Over” at the March on Washington in 1963. She also performed at the first New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival in 1970.

In Chicago we will conduct an in-depth interview with **Mavis Staples**, who described Mahalia Jackson previously to us as, “The model for who I became.”

In recent years, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival has hosted an annual tribute to Jackson, which has helped to revive her popularity in New Orleans and beyond. This reinvigorated attention to Jackson is connected to a broader post-Katrina reflection on the value of New Orleans’ deeper past. Soul singer **Irma Thomas**, who we will interview for this program, has headlined these tributes -- part of her own willingness in the postdiluvian era to expand her sense of musical identity, breaking out from soul and R & B to sing gospel and blues. We will include Thomas’ and others’ gospel performances from the Jazz Festival. In some ways, these performances are recreations of classics rather than transformative extensions of the Mahalia Jackson repertoire, and Thomas speaks eloquently of her selective approach to Jackson’s recorded legacy.

In addition, we will speak with **Dr. Michael White**, traditional jazz clarinetist and Keller Professor in the Humanities at Xavier University, who has researched Jackson’s career and built his own local concerts and gatherings based on her work. White has chosen to create new arrangements of the Mahalia Jackson repertoire in a traditional jazz format, and to use both instrumental “voices” and various singers to both recreate and extend her vocal sound. Both Irma Thomas and Michael White

have expressed concern for the greater need for human respect on the streets of the city – which currently has the highest per capita murder rate nationwide – and have invoked the sacred aspects of gospel music’s greatest singer from New Orleans to do so.

Another voice in the show -- both performing and in commentary -- will be Mahalia Jackson acolyte and singer **Cynthia Girtly**, who performs only sacred music and regularly does Jackson’s repertoire. African American ethnomusicologist with a focus on black sacred music **Dr. Joyce Marie Jackson** at LSU has closely followed Jackson’s career and helps examine her mythic status in and beyond New Orleans.

In the midst of a current national debate over the proper role of religion in education, government, and society broadly, we will show how these performers and scholars are putting the memory of Mahalia Jackson – and her commitment to social justice and the sanctity of life – to work in the present. In her lifetime, Jackson focused attention on the inequities of the Jim Crow South and, with her music, offered an emotional and aesthetic escape; the contemporary artists and humanists we will feature on this *American Routes* program demonstrate the enduring power of Jackson’s voice, and gospel music broadly, in New Orleans, Chicago, and across the country to address the trials and troubles of the present. As Jackson herself said, “I sing God’s music because it makes me feel free...It gives me hope. With the blues when you finish, you still have the blues.”

## Visualizing Sound & Sound Visionaries

“It’s all rhythm [whether] with a stick or a brush.”

—folklorist and jazz biographer, John Szwed

*American Routes* starts from what may be a surprising premise: that radio can be a visual medium. The words, music and soundscapes in every *American Routes* radio stream are assembled, written, voiced, and performed with the intent of activating listeners’ visual imaginations through song, stories, and sequences that help combine edification with entertainment. This program will listen carefully to and look closely at that relationship between sound and sight.

We will survey the rich history of recording and manipulating sound in terms of the visual, focusing on the work of “sound visionaries” like the painter **Romare Bearden**, the avant garde artist and recordist **Harry Smith**, and sound modernist and television maverick **Tony Schwartz**. Also, with unsighted musicians who visualize sound to a high degree, such as the pianists **Ray Charles** (from the archives) and **Henry Butler**, we will explore how blind musicians understand the visual—along with sighted persons who may write or sing especially visual song lyrics. We will “see” how visual artists conceive of melody and rhythm on the canvas or in film. Fundamentally, we will ask about how cultural information about the visual can “make sense” across the senses.

Radio was hardly the first sound technology that provided the intellect and imagination with new insights for creativity. From the very beginnings of modern communication, devices -- such as Samuel Morse’s telegraph, Alexander Graham Bell’s telephone, and Thomas Edison’s phonograph -- were seen as something more than amplifiers and accelerators of human messages. They were mechanisms with mysterious and mystical possibilities. There were sonic magic shows associated with them, electrical séances, claims of recording the dead and of hearing voices from outer space, even reports of reaching heaven itself. As important as these inventions were, they were never just about sound: when mixed with what appeared to be the mysterious qualities of electricity, they constituted a sonic imaginary. (Incidentally, all of these sonic devices turn up as early as 1897 in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*.)

Once recording machines became at least somewhat portable, commercial recording companies began making what were essentially field recordings, stepping out of studios in the 1920s and 30s beating the musical bushes to find and record hillbillies, African Americans, and West Indians, opening up countries, regions, cultures, races, and religions to the rest of the world, by making it possible to bring sound expressed as music in a 78 rpm recording session to other times and places. But even in the studios, lines were being crossed: radical identity transformations were now possible through the anonymity of records, with men and women recording under assumed names and sexes, races, dialects and languages. Increasingly, radio and records crossed the color lines of listenership. And the underground of stories, songs and jokes that was previously too raw, too sexist, and too “blue” for print turned up somehow as safer (or at least more private) on recordings.

As new sonic technologies were developed, some of their first users were looking far beyond their obvious commercial application. In France, Pierre Schaeffer began experimenting with recording tape as soon as it appeared, changing the speed of natural sounds, running train whistles backwards by reversing the tape (as Dziga Vertov had done with the directions of trains on film), cutting tapes to alter the grammar of the sounds of nature, and using “noises” to create *musique concrete* -- music made without instruments, and sometimes without humans, for that matter.

There seemed to be no limits once the sonic genie was let out of the bottle. A long chain of sound innovators in the second half of the twentieth century used everything at their disposal, and much of what we think of as modern had distant origins: Composer Paul Hindemith, for example, in 1930 Berlin, used recordings like a DJ to mix live and recorded music together and manipulate the discs for sonic effects. Disney’s 1940 film *Fantasia* anticipated multi-media by mixing film recordings, abstract art, animation, live actors, a lecturer, and tossing together classical and avant-garde musics along with jazz.

Even the studios changed. They were no longer limited to attempting to record music so that it would sound natural and real when played at home. Invariably the changes that were worked out on music in the studio were not as realistic as they came to be heard, as composers, musicians, and producers began to adjust their compositions and arrangements to fit recordings. Symphonic music changed speed and length to fit single 3-minute 78 rpm records: blues songs were shortened leading to individual iconic versions of songs previously shared in an oral tradition community; and the verses of pop tunes were gradually abandoned to leave only the refrain with fewer, shorter instrumental solos. Reverse evolution was happening, with some important aspects of music becoming simpler rather than more complex in an attempt to reach wider and more diverse audiences with “sameness” -- the coin and bane of the music industry.

Studios had finally become instruments - producers such as Teo Macero expanded sonic space in the 50s and 60s beyond what could be heard in “live” settings. By the 1970s remixes were beginning to make classic jazz and pop recordings sound different from what had originally been recorded, so that they better approximated the new sonics of clubs, arenas, car radios, and headphones. Brian Eno in the 1980s was making music without using musicians, and changing conventionally recorded music to sound so strangely different that it was hardly recognizable.

But sightless musicians like **Ray Charles** and **Henry Butler** may be among the best examples of the artists we refer to here as “sound visionaries.” Charles told *American Routes* he loved radio. “All blind people love radio cause it puts us on an even footing with the sighted listener,” Charles said. “Really we are ahead of them, cause we can ‘see’ sound.” Butler, the blind New Orleans jazz pianist has asserted that, “Sound has color. Making music is mixing color like a painter.” Perhaps miraculously, Butler has taken up photography, in both documentary and artistic forms, and has exhibited his work. He will be an interviewee and will demonstrate colors at the piano, talk about his photography, and give us a tour of how he visualizes his childhood home in New Orleans’ Irish



Channel neighborhood. We will hear too from our archival interview with Charles discussing his aesthetic vision of music and life.

Our program will also feature recordists and producers who created works that were sometimes so far from the norm of recording that their originators might better be called curators, composers, or even sound theorists. Think of the soundscapes of Harry Smith, who recorded out of his window all of Manhattan asleep at night, week after week, or composer Murray Shaffer's and ethnographer Steve Feld's recordings of large spaces in Canada and cultural tableaux ranging from the significance of church bells in Eastern Europe and to totemic birds and their songs in Papua-New Guinea. Some have created sonic worlds by curation, as in thematic recordings like Frank Sinatra's consistently somber *Only the Lonely* with arrangements by Nelson Riddle, or Harry Smith's *The Anthology of American Folk Music*, the enormously influential multi-disc recordings that exposed the world to early commercial recordings of folk music that were as alien and exotic as field recordings from distant cultures. Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan and many others speak of it as the founding document of the folk music revival. Jerry Garcia said the record "set me up," particularly its inclusion of "The Cuckoo" sung and frailed on banjo by Clarence Ashley of Bristol Tennessee, which the late Grateful Dead bandleader and soothsayer--himself an art student initially and later a tie designer--hailed as "real folk music."

On this *American Routes* program, we will present the only extant in-depth interview with **Harry Smith**. The interview, which covers Smith's wide-ranging aesthetic interests, was recorded in broadcast quality at Smith collaborator Allen Ginsberg's apartment in the East Village when Nick Spitzer was assisting the Smithsonian Institution (1989) in receiving and further documenting their acquisition of Folkways Records for which Smith's iconic analogy had been produced. A remarkable mix of both modernist and conservator of folk tradition, Smith is known to one group of followers for rerecording ("bootlegging" really, though the major record companies were no longer recording deep traditional music) the 78 rpm recordings of oral traditions -- old murder ballads, raunchy country blues, and cowboy songs among others all artfully and wryly annotated -- onto the then new 33 1/3 rpm records to recreate a comprehensive box set on Folkways Records. Another group of acolytes know Smith more for his association with the Beats, living in the Chelsea Hotel in the 1950s experimenting with drugs and spiritualism, combining his auto didactic knowledge of anthropology of Northwest Coast Indians of his youthful days with his love of jazz, folk music, and studies of the occult. He is best known in this realm for his hand painted films such as the *Abstraction* series and "Message from the Sun." Folklorist and jazz critic **John Szwed**, whose biographies of Sun Ra, Miles Davis, Alan Lomax and Billie Holiday are widely acclaimed, will be our key advisor for a Harry Smith portrayal. Szwed is currently work on a book about Smith.

Audio engineer **Tony Schwartz** turned his agoraphobia (in his case, fear of leaving his zip code, New York 10019) into a deep look into just how much was going on sonically in one small area of New York City. Schwartz, who most famously produced the anti-Goldwater campaign ad in 1964 of a girl picking daisies juxtaposed to a nuclear mushroom cloud, is heard in Spitzer's 1989 interview for the Smithsonian describing

how he went about making the LP “New York 19” as a modernist and documentary art soundscape. The work was also issued on Folkways Recordings under the direction of the late Moses Asch, himself a sound visionary for his iconic and encyclopedic record label dedicated to the music and narratives of world cultures and special focus on the American folk revival. Asch was also a collaborator with Harry Smith.

In recent years, major art museums have created shows that revealed the long and very deep connections between painting and sound: “Visual Music: Syneesthesia in Art and Music Since 1900” at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art in 2005, and “Sons et Lumieres: Une Histoire du son dans l’art du XXe Siecle” at the Pompidou in Paris in 2004. These exhibits made clear certain issues of esotericism in the arts, the importance of light to vision and color, the role of abstraction in several arts, and fresh ideas on film, painting, and music, as well as on the links between the brain, hearing, and vision.

In a parallel way, an exhibition planned for 2017 at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art expands upon the arc of Romare Bearden’s work known for musical inspiration. These have long included his collages and paintings of black musical and festival life surrounded by country blues from the Carolinas to urban jazz parades depicting Ellington compositions. His urban NYC paintings, ranging from 52<sup>nd</sup> Street dance scenes to Wynton Marsalis’s “J Mood” reflect and project Bearden’s Harlem Renaissance cosmopolitanism. The Ogden exhibition, curated by our longtime advisor **Robert O’Meally** of the Columbia University Center for Jazz Studies, is entitled “Visual Second-Line: The Diasporic Art of Romare Bearden.” Included will be Bearden’s heretofore largely unseen paintings of New Orleans jazz including “Processions and Second Lines,” “Bayou Fever,” “The Emperor of the Golden Trumpet,” and “New Orleans Marching Band,” among others. O’Meally will advise us on and be interviewed for a feature about Bearden’s musical influences from New Orleans and the wider Caribbean as a follow up to our earlier treatment of his Carolina and New York City axis. We will also seek the advice of and interview Bearden scholar **Glenda Gilmore** of the Yale University History Department.

The program will also include very brief archival clips from great music producers who were visionaries in being able to convey distinctive aspects of the sound of studio recordings in compelling ways: Sam Phillips of Memphis’ Sun Records; Cosimo Matassa, recordist of many New Orleans R & B hits by Fats Domino, Ernie K-Doe; Jerry Wexler the producer of R & B and soul at Atlantic, and Creed Taylor at Impulse Records among others. The playlist for the program will be a mix of iconic and ironic selections that also address directly the visualization of words and music, examples include: “Black is the Color of My True Love’s Hair,” Nina Simone; “Choice of Colors,” The Impressions; “Colors,” Leon Thomas/Pharoah Sanders; “Blue Moon of Kentucky,” Elvis Presley; “Blue Moon,” Bobby “Blue” Bland; “I’m Painting the Town Red,” Billie Holiday; “Colors (various),” by word jazzman Ken Nordine; and “(Blue Must Be) The Color of the Blues,” George Jones.

## **Miami: Documenting Diversity that Defines the 'Magic City'**

This *American Routes* program devoted to the culture(s) of place will tell Miami's story through its music history in both narratives, interviews and, of course, songs and styles.

Miami is a transient city, surrounded by water, with people coming in and out from all directions. It's an unusually diverse city, composed of fragmented communities that tend to isolate themselves from each other. People come to this city and often find a microcosm of the places they came from, built and maintained by immigrants before them. It's easy for many newcomers to continue their traditions and speak the languages practiced in their home countries. For these reasons, Miami's localized cultural traditions are deep and show great continuity, but are not fully shared in the creolized sense of a vernacular.

People are tied to their homelands in a special way here. They not only preserve and practice their traditions, but they also maintain connections with their homeland through their identities and sense of place. The idea of "home" is a reference often shared between Miami and some other place, even if you've been living here for decades.

In addition to the diverse array of people who live in Miami, tourists also contribute to the mix. In 2014, over 14.5 million tourists visited the region. Since its beginnings, Miami's tourism industry has been an integral factor in its development, and this remains the case.

Miami is also a relatively new city, incorporated in 1896. Even before its incorporation, the diversity of people who lived here or passed through was remarkable. The population is 65% Hispanic or Latino, with over half of that population claiming Cuban ancestry. The black community (African American, Haitian, Jamaican, etc.) makes up almost 20% of the total population, with the white, non-Hispanic population at just 15%.

For all of the reasons above, Miami struggles with a sense of identity. It's difficult to build a sense of place when the people and places around you are in flux. This is perhaps what makes Miami such an exciting place to live. You never really know what's coming around the corner.

Given its particular kind of diversity and fragmented make-up, Miami is rich in cultures but syncretism is not common. However, there are two domains in which Miamians are comfortable with fusing different cultures – food and music. You can find all kinds of combinations of cuisines (Korean-Peruvian; Cuban-Chinese, etc.), a trend that is becoming even more popular these days. Music is no different. You can hear music from around the world here, but you can also see combinations of elements from different genres to create new sounds. There is no concrete

definition for what makes the “Miami Sound,” but if there were any definitive characteristic, it would be creolization and forms of assimilation to dominant sounds and tastes.

Our program’s historical survey of Miami will begin in earnest in the late 1940s, when Latin and African American orchestras were the major draws at hotels and clubs. These performers were unable to sleep or dine in the segregated hotels in which they performed. At the same time, white crooners and lounge acts such as Frank Sinatra were performing in Miami Beach hotels. In this era through the 1950s, the Overtown music scene developed and came to be known as “Little Broadway” and “The Harlem of the South.” Overtown was considered the historic heart of the city’s black community before the construction of I-95 displaced half of the population during the 1960s. National black acts like Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Cab Calloway, Josephine Baker, Billie Holiday, Nat King Cole, and Aretha Franklin performed in venues like the Lyric Theater.

By the 1960s, soul singers Betty Wright and Sam & Dave started their careers in Miami. Wright started with Deep City Records, the first-black owned record label in Florida. Ray Charles and James Brown made early recordings in Miami, and Sam Cooke’s *Live at the Harlem Square Club 1963* was recorded in Overtown. Wayne Cochran, a white soul singer with connections to James Brown, retired from his music career and became an evangelist in Miami. One of his signature hits is “Goin’ Back to Miami.”

In the 1970s and early 1980s, the disco movement was huge in Miami. Disco brought with it a fast growing night life scene with many clubs opening all over South Florida. This in turn led to a localized “Miami Sound.” TK Records and its founder Henry Stone, a crucial player in the birth of disco and The Miami Sound, first recorded KC and the Sunshine Band, which was influenced by Bahamian Junkanoo music – elements of Bahamian and Caribbean music from Miami’s neighborhoods.

Although there was plenty of exchange between Cuba and Miami throughout the twentieth century, the first wave of political refugees arrived in 1959 and led to a huge expansion of Cuban music. This is well documented by historian Eloy Cepero in *Cubans, an Epic Journey*. Cuban and Afro-Cuban folk artists such as Ezequiel Torres, an Afro-Cuban batá drummer, continue practicing their traditions in Miami to this day, including those related to Afro-Cuban Orisha worship. In the 1970s, the younger generation of later immigrants, influenced by soul and rock music, started new bands and perform at “open houses,” which in turn led to the Latin pop explosion exemplified by Gloria Estefan and The Miami Sound Machine in the 1990s. We will include players who have stayed within the received tradition alongside innovators.

Styles in ethnic terms include: Cuban dance genres, conga and rumba; Dominican *merengue* and *bachata*; Colombian *currulao*, *vallenato*, and *cumbia*; Brazilian *samba*; Haitian *compass*; Jamaican reggae; Trinidadian calypso, *soca* and steel pan.

While the chronology outlined above will inform our program, we will not hew to a strict chronological survey. Rather, we will primarily take a current cultural geographical approach in our field visits, as we have done in previous successful city soundscape programs devoted to Los Angeles, Detroit, and others. This sort of sonic journey to distinctive and diverse neighborhoods enables us to selectively address the wide field of styles that match up with *American Routes'* own aesthetic orientation to deep tradition and emergent vernacular forms. It also will help listeners create a visual soundscape tied to "street culture" in seven significant neighborhoods: Little Havana, Little Haiti, South Beach, Downtown, Coconut Grove, Overtown and Wynwood.

Humanist and community artist interviewees will include: Miami ethnicity specialist **Dr. Alex Steptick**; ethnomusicologist **Dr. Stephen Stuempfle** who specializes in south Florida, especially music from the Caribbean. We also expect to speak with historian [Paul George](#); [Jacob Katel](#), aka Swamp Dog of TK Records; [Eloy Cepero](#) for Cuban and more broadly Latin music; Dr. [Dorothy Jenkins Fields](#) for Overtown; DJ Le Spam from Spam Allstars for recording history in Miami and the current music scene.

Overall we will collaborate with folklife specialist **Vanessa Navarro** and **Michael Knoll** in partnership with HistoryMiami's South Florida Folklife Center. The history museum is 75 years old and Smithsonian accredited. The Folklife Center has been conducting ethnographic research in Miami communities for nearly 3 decades. Navarro and Knoll have already advised us as to key humanities scholars, artists and community sources regarding Miami music and culture.

## **The Sound of Pluralism: Music as Cultural Identity in New York City Neighborhoods**

This *American Routes* program will listen carefully to the ethnic communities of New York City in order to examine immigration, assimilation, ethnic identity, cultural continuity, resilience, and the possibility of urbane neighborliness amidst the urban soundscapes of what the author E. B. White once called “the capital of the world.”

Demographers predict that the United States population will be “majority minority” by 2080; for children, the change will take place closer to 2035. But the transition happened decades ago, in the early 1980s, in New York City – which has long served as America’s icon for polyglot cosmopolitanism. “It is in New York’s diverse, changing neighborhoods,” the ethnographer Roger Sanjek asserts, “that clues about the *future of us all* may first be glimpsed” (Sanjek 2000, italics added).

Contemporary politics reveals some white people to be anxious about these changing demographics and the shifting power arrangements they may herald; new emigrants and members of long-standing minority communities alike, meanwhile, wonder if the most generous promises of American citizenship will yet be extended to them. In this uneasy political climate, *American Routes* – with the help of humanities colleagues and community performers and commentators – will visit New York City’s outer boroughs to explore how neighbors are making sense of life in some of the most diverse neighborhoods in the world.

To walk down the block in many New York neighborhoods is to be showered in sound: music blasting from boom boxes on the sidewalk, set aside men seated at domino tables, or grandmas with babies holding court outside apartment buildings on hot summer evenings. What you hear – *merengue*, *salsa*, *Haitian rara*, *hip-hop*, or *rancheras* – can help you know where you are and whom you are with. In this way, music can serve as an instant sonic marker of identity; and in a city with so many residents, marking out who you are is an important task. Our initial program will focus on several distinct New York communities, exploring these connected themes of music, culture, identity, geography, and resilience.

One segment will bring listeners to Haitian communities in Queens and Brooklyn. New York’s Haitian population is estimated at 400,000 people. Many arrived during the Duvalier era from 1957 to 1986, while a new wave of Haitian people have arrived in New York in the aftermath of the devastating 2010 earthquake. Oppression, negative stereotypes, and prejudice toward Haitian culture hamper tradition bearers in their efforts to prevent cultural knowledge loss, especially in regards to Vodou religious practice. Nonetheless, taking cultural elements of Vodou and mixing them with jazz has been the project of visionary artists like **Yves “Chico” Boyer**, bassist of the *mizik rasin* band *Foula*, whose members studied with Vodou drummers in Haiti. The music encountered most resistance from Haitian immigrants who wanted to assimilate and felt that Vodou was “ignorant.” But the music also served a role in the 1980s as a space of resistance to the Duvalier dictatorship. Ethnomusicologist Gage Averil writes that *mizik rasin*

musicians felt that their music expanded on Vodou traditions, “It was very much a point of pride that ounsì (initiated practitioners) recognized the rhythms and performed the correct dances to each” (Averill 1997). This can still be witnessed today in Haitian communities in New York, where *Foula* concerts bring out appreciative audiences who know all the dances and are not afraid to participate.

Another segment will focus on the nearly 750,000 Colombians in New York. Colombia’s distinct heritage groups – Indigenous, Spanish, and African – and regional cultures – Pacific, Atlantic-Caribbean, Eastern Plains and Andean – can all be found within the New York Colombian community. *American Routes* will explore the distinctions and commonalities among Colombians in New York, focusing especially on the Afro-Colombian group **Grupo Rebolu**, which was founded to celebrate the folklore traditions of the Afro-descendants of Colombia’s Caribbean coast. The group itself is a tale of immigration. The band’s leader, Ronald Polo, and his childhood friend, percussionist Morris Canate grew up in the town of Barranquilla. They played music in school together and at the town’s annual carnival. Eventually, Ronald immigrated to the United States and invited Morris to join him, which he did three years later. When they play in New York, they combine the traditional rhythms of their homeland: *gaitas*, *tambura*, *puyas*, *chande*, *bullenregue*, *cumbias* with what they call “New York style.” Ronald Polo has commented about this pan-Latin combination, “We are traditional musicians, so what I do is take traditional rhythms from the north coast of Colombia and add other sounds of Puerto Rico, Cuba, Mexico, Peru. Everything you hear, you can get something from; and that’s what I do, picking up the vibe of Latinos based in New York City.” (Hamilton 2012).

Throughout the program, we will note cultural transitions that reflect new approaches to tradition, and creative innovations. We will explore, for example, how women have assumed new public performance roles as cultural conservationists and creators of Haitian drumming and Afro-Colombian music – roles they rarely occupied before migrating to New York City.

A third segment will teach listeners about the Garifuna, an Afro-Indigenous people who reside in Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala – and the Bronx, which is home to the largest community of Garifuna outside of Central America. *American Routes* will visit with vocalist **Lucy Blanco**, a Honduran Garifuna who helped to found the Afri-Garifuna Jazz Ensemble in the Bronx. Blanco’s work mixes Garifuna traditional rhythms and language with jazz – including, for example, her take on Brooklyn-born George Gershwin’s classic “Summertime,” sung in the Garifuna language.

A fourth segment will examine the growing Quechua (Kichwa)-speaking community who have resettled in the Bronx from the highlands of Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador. *American Routes* will visit with construction worker **Segundo Angamarca**, who founded the online Radio el Tambo in his basement near Yankee Stadium, featuring the program “Kichwa Hatari.” We will ask about how Quechua-speaking people see themselves within the broader community of Latinos living in the city...and we will tune-in to check out El Tambo.

*American Routes* will also spend time exploring the origins of hip hop in New York's West Indian communities, listening to how artists such as DJ Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, Grandmaster Flash, and then DJ Red Alert, KRS-One – all of whom have family connections to Jamaica, Barbados, Antigua, or Trinidad – called on the sound system and toasting traditions as they innovated a distinctly New York City sound.

Meanwhile, as we explore New York City's ethnic cultures today, we also will look back at the city's history of immigration. We will analyze, for example, how Manhattan's Lower East Side became, in the words of historian Hasia Diner, the "epicenter of American Jewish memory," functioning "not just as a particular neighborhood where many Jews lived for some period of time but as exemplary of *the* Jewish experience in America" (Diner 2000). A key part of that experience was klezmer music, so we will listen to archival recordings and interviews with the revered Klezmer clarinetist and composer **Dave Tarras** – focusing on one legendary 1978 concert at Casa Galicia. Among the nostalgic old timers in the room that night were also the young musicians **Andy Statman** and Zev Feldman, who were avidly taking notes and plotting the soon to be klezmer revival. The concert marked the start of a wildly successful tour for Tarras, put on by Statman and Feldman for the Balkan Arts Center (now the Center for Traditional Music and Dance) and was the definitive spark that reignited Klezmer music scene in America, of which Statman himself is now a standard bearer. (*American Routes* has archival interviews with Statman.)

*American Routes* will also look back on the "middle eastern" neighborhood clustered on Manhattan's 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the 1950s and 1960s. Clubs with names like Egyptian Gardens and the Grecian Palace Café catered to Manhattan businessmen, featuring belly-dancers and "oriental" music often played by Armenian immigrants from Turkey. The musician **Marko Melkon**, whose music the program will feature, was one of these. He was born into an Armenian family in 1895, in a part of Turkey called at that time Ottoman Smyrna. In 1921, Melkon fled his hometown to avoid conscription into the Ottoman Army, eventually making his way to New York, where he gained a following amongst the Armenian American community as an expert oud player and singer. He made his life work playing in the 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue cafés, but also made his way into the recording studio from time to time, even writing a *rembetika* song (Greek urban blues) about the refugee experience entitled *To Prodfygaki* "The Little Refugee." These restaurant gigs were important to sustaining the Armenian music community, which in turn served not only Armenians, but Greeks and Turkish immigrants. Today, musicians like **Richard Hagopian** (a National Heritage Fellow) and his son **Harold** hold the history of this time in their own work as musicians and preservationists, while newly arrived immigrants like the Brooklyn violinist **Eylem Basaldi** combines the traditions of her Turkish heritage with American influences.

These overviews provide only a tiny portion of what might be done and already represents but a few of the cultural profiles our advisors have identified. We expect at least one more program will in whole or part emerge from this particular effort. Indeed could easily be a 26 part series!



Our aim here is to offer a humanities perspective on New York City's music, immigration, and ethnic diversity in a way that can help inform the larger American discourse on these crucial concerns. Inspired in part by the work of anthropologist and humanist Roger Sanjek (1998, 368), we take "real-life, real-time ethnographic observation" of narratives and performance as real and representative in ways that social sciences often miss or dismiss as "'anecdotal' or 'unrepresentative.'" We believe aesthetics matter in this complex realm, and that the commentaries and music we record and edit for this program area ideally suited for a wide radio-listening public.

We will be advised in this program by key personnel from two of the City's premier institutions devoted to understanding and supporting the culture of immigrant communities, and the vernacular cultures and aesthetics of New York as a whole: **Dr. Maureen Loughran and Peter Rushefsky at The Center for Traditional Music and Dance; and Dr. Steven Zeitlin and Elena Martinez at City Lore.**

## **Roads to Somewhere: Streetscapes, Crossroads, and Pit Stops**

This *American Routes* program will survey the significance of street and highway culture in American life as heralded or bemoaned in song from blues to hip-hop, country to rock.

America has always been a nation of people on the move: a society comprised of colonial explorers and cross continent pioneers, of the grimly enslaved and indentured, of dream seekers and those in need of a fresh start or asylum from a troubled place. Migration is at the core of our national sensibility and often discontent. This program will use music and songs as aesthetic vehicles for exploring these varied life journeys.

The rhetoric of the road in blues may be hopeful as in "Goin' where the climate suits my clothes..." and leaving trouble behind with the "Key to the Highway." It may also reflect despair, being "on the dark road crying," and "Big Road Blues." In country music, the trail to "Detroit City" or the "Lost Highway" is strewn with loneliness, alcohol, and ruined relationships, but then there's the uplift of "On the Road Again" and a happy return hope of "Six Days on the Road." Examples abound and can fill our soundscape. Indeed, our program is called *American Routes* – with a knowing nod to its homonym "roots" – in order to summon to mind the ambiguities of being rooted or rootless, free to travel or exiled to the road.

The road can reflect a state of mind, but it is also a physical place that can be variously potent or quotidian. Our show will take a careful look at the much maligned New Jersey Turnpike, with its rusting industrial landscape and "pit stops" (a metaphor of auto racing and rallies), or rest areas named for colonials like Molly Pitcher and sports uber menschs like Vince Lombardi at either end; the Turnpike has been mentioned nostalgically by singer-songwriters such as Tom Rush and Simon and Garfunkel. We will wander down streets like Beale Street in Memphis and Bourbon Street in New Orleans, which commodify their histories, and we will speak with "street people" on neo "skid rows" from "Deep Elm" in Dallas to the Mission District in San Francisco. Many decry these streets as sites of vagrancy or Disneysque tenderloin, yet such gathering points often have the vitality of club life, play, and transgression, at least historically, that turn them into iconic spots for tourists.

We will also investigate the mysterious images of crossroads power in places like where Mississippi highways 61 and 49 intersect, and power spots in the inner city long lionized by social scientists and humanists in classics such as "Tally's Corner" in Washington DC (Liebow 1967) and "Deep Down in the Jungle" on Philadelphia's South Street (Abrahams 1970). We will visit these places and noted intersections in New York and San Francisco, Miami and New Orleans to record crossroads and corner life in ambience, *vox humana* woman and man on the street narratives and appropriate music.

Throughout, we will stay attuned to the cultural, political, and economic ideas that are embedded in the streets themselves. The rational urban street grid, the suburban cul de sac, the tourist parkway, and the interstate highway each reflect new ideas about how Americans ought to move towards – or away from – from each other.

A new institution in Dallas, the Street Culture Museum, offers us a chance to do audio ethnography in the area with those who both dwell in the streets and those who hope to show that “The street is a gathering place -- a physical and metaphorical way to travel with one another to unfamiliar territory and find common ground,” in the words of folklorist, documentarian and playwright **Dr. Alan Govenar** (see his letter). In collaboration with Govenar, his Documentary Arts group, and the Street Culture Museum, *American Routes* will co-host and co-produce a public concert in Dallas with urban Gulf Coast R & B of Beaumont’s Barbara Lynn (the “black female Elvis”) New Orleans second line street jazz of Treme Brass Band, Western swing of the roadhouse from the 3 fiddle leaders of the Quebe Sisters of Dallas; and Tex-Mex music of San Antonio’s West Side from Santiago Jimenez Jr. -- all of whom can reflect upon the process of urbanization in their aesthetics and communities. In both on-stage interviews, studio conversations with performers and field recordings, the many ways in which street cultural landscapes and destinies in migrating or touring on Americas highways will be conjoined for comparison and consideration within the *American Routes* soundscape. **Dr. Alan Govenar, Dr. Andy Horowitz, and Dr. Bruce Raeburn** will advise.

## **“Angola Bound”: Prison Songs & Narratives**

I got lucky last summer when I got my time, Angola bound  
Well my partner got a hundred, I got ninety-nine, Angola bound  
You been a long time coming but you're welcome home, Angola bound  
And go to Louisiana get your burdens on, Angola bound  
Oh captain, oh captain don't you be so cruel, Angola bound  
Oh you work me harder than you work that mule, Angola bound

— Aaron Neville, song based on oral tradition toast at Angola

This *American Routes* program will tackle race and racism, spirituality and freedom, and crime and punishment in the age of mass incarceration through an exploration of the stunningly rich historic and current musical culture of the Louisiana State Penitentiary and songs about imprisonment as both a reality in and metaphor of the human condition.

The program will build on a recent conference, “‘Angola Bound’ Revisited: Music at Louisiana State Penitentiary,” which was funded by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, and was co-hosted by *American Routes* with the Angola Prison Museum Board. We will examine life and culture inside the prison through interviews with inmates current and past – including Charles Neville, the saxophonist and oral historian of the Neville Brothers who was an inmate at Angola for five years in the 1960s. Because Angola has also been a site of intense interest for noted ethnomusicologists such as John and Alan Lomax, and later Harry Oster, we will be able to draw from archival prison recordings stretching back nearly a century – including recently rediscovered recordings from the 1950s that stand to dramatically change our understanding of Angola’s music and culture.

With 6,300 prisoners and 1,800 staff, Angola is the largest maximum security prison in the United States. It is set in the state with the highest incarceration rate in the country: out of every 100,000 Louisianans, over 1,400 are imprisoned. Opened in 1901, the Louisiana State Penitentiary is named Angola after the four combined plantations that make up its 18,000 acres. The name comes from an African regional source of slaves on those Angola Plantations. Surrounded by the Mississippi River on three sides, Angola the prison has been called the “Alcatraz of the South,” due to its isolation and difficulty of escape. Prisoners call it “The Farm,” due to their hard work in the fields growing and harvesting sugarcane, cotton, corn and other cash crops.

Today, Angola’s population is nearly 80% African American. The prison was long segregated and known for harsh conditions equated with slavery. Inmate “trustee” guards were considered especially harsh by everyday prisoners in an environs where “sunup to sundown” work was expected, even in the brutal heat of Louisiana summers. If workers, many of them from the city with no agricultural experience, fell behind they would be harassed, punished, and, in some cases, summarily killed. Running from the worksite gang was responded to with gunfire from guards on horseback. Escapes have been few,

all ultimately unsuccessful and ending in return to the prison or death. Despite various reforms to improve work, health and educational conditions, depression is common, violence and sexual predation though now less prevalent, are always present, especially toward other prisoners less able to defend themselves.

Prisoners have reacted in various ways to the restrained and repressed atmosphere of life in Angola. Protest of conditions over the years has taken the form of self-inflicted wounds of the Heel String gang, when 31 inmates cut their Achilles tendon in 1952, and more conventional hunger strikes and verbal outcry. There is an excellent newspaper called *The Angolite* and a radio station KLSP, known as “Incarceration Station,” both run by inmates. And a continuous counterpoint to the grim routines and sometime violent excesses of prison life has been the music made by inmates in work settings, at sanctioned seasonal parties, alone in cells, at official church services, or wherever and whenever the spirit moves people to song.

Music has come to symbolize people whose soul and spirit are not contained and shackled by the state, even as their body is so constrained. As part of the recent “‘Angola Bound’ Revisited” conference, we interviewed prisoners about the role of music in their lives. This *American Routes* program will feature those interviews, including one with **Christopher James**, drummer for the Little Country band, who said, “While I’m playing music I’m free. It opens me open and puts me in a peaceful state of mind to where I’m really not here when I’m playing music. That’s my escape.”

James is in an official prison band, but many prisoners sing in everyday life in various ways. Ethnomusicologist **Ben Harbert**, who produced *Follow Me Down* (2012), a film about music in Angola and other nearby Louisiana prisons said, “I am looking for connections between musical experiences and prison experiences. Many convicted for life, their stories reveal ways that music can reconfigure ordinary life, form unlikely communities, and provide a way of coping with the bleakest of circumstances. These musicians rap in the fields while picking okra, soothe themselves with R&B in lockdown and create a cappella gospel harmonies” (public lecture for “‘Angola Bound’ Revisited,” 6/10/2016).

Along with these investigations of life in Angola today, *American Routes* will explore the history of the prison, and outside fascination with life on the inside. The program will review how the musical significance of Angola was first recognized by the father and son recording team of **John and Alan Lomax**. The Lomaxes, who also recorded at Parchman Farm in Mississippi and other prisons in the South, believed that the institutions had ironically remained preserves of deep African aesthetics in collective worksongs, also called “chain gang songs” in the prison environs. In 1933, the Lomaxes discovered the musician Huddie “Lead Belly” Ledbetter, a 12-string blues songster from Mooringsport, Louisiana who was incarcerated at Angola for murder. Following his release, in part based on his musical talent, Ledbetter traveled with the Lomaxes as their driver, moved to New York City, and became an influential performer in folk music circles. His songs like “Goodnight Irene” and “Midnight Special” later became part of the American songbook. The Lomax prison recordings recently returned to popular awareness with the

Coen Brothers' film *O Brother, Where Art Thou*; in the film's opening scene, prisoners break rocks to a Lomax recording of James Carter and his prison gang singing "Po' Lazarus" at Parchman Farm in 1959. The Lomax's prison recordings, therefore, continue to shape how Americans think about life in prison to this day.

This *American Routes* program will also feature the work of **Harry Oster**, an LSU English professor who visited Angola in the late 1950s and produced a series of important music recordings. Under the thrall of the Lomax perspective regarding work songs as African survivals, Oster found that the song form had diminished in communal use. He had to arrange for work songs at recording sessions with men wielding sledge hammers for rocks, or axes for chopping wood. He also recorded spirituals, and *American Routes* will demonstrate how gospel music remains popular to this day—albeit in new formats—with prisoners seeking their reward in the afterlife. Current prisoner **Larry Wilkinson**, incarcerated for second degree murder, is the lead singer for the Main Prison Gospel Band. He told us in a June 2016 interview, "As a group we praise God to the utmost and sincerely. So in order for us to sound like we sound, we have to try and walk that walk in a Christian life as positive as we should."

Oster focused his recording efforts on Angola's deep African American traditions, including blues. One prisoner in particular, guitarist Robert Pete Williams, became well known for his complex blues guitar style and extended narrative songs – so much so that once released for second degree murder (he claimed it was self-defense), Williams was brought to the Newport Folk Festival and into the arena where Bob Dylan would emulate his vocals, calling him a major influence. Others, such as Bonnie Raitt, made efforts to learn Williams compellingly unorthodox guitar style.

This *American Routes* program also will highlight previously unknown Oster recordings that shed new light on life in Angola at the time. Arhoolie Records recently reviewed their holdings of Oster's recordings and realized that he had recorded even more styles of music at Angola—other than worksongs, blues and spirituals—that were not selected for his 1960s issues on the Folk Lyric label. Oster did not issue the Acadian and Creole songs of prisoners—perhaps because they didn't fulfill his Lomax-inspired core project of seeking surviving Africanism in worksongs and blues—nor did he ever publish the songs of New Orleans Mardi Gras Indians in Angola. The Indians—black Creoles and African Americans—used markedly African-inflected call-and-response songs, and rhythms that honored Native Americans, to summons to mind indigenous warrior societies struggling against the colonials. These recordings reveal the power slave descendants found in those cultural forms. Our program will demonstrate how Mardi Gras Indians in New Orleans continue to draw inspiration from those forms today.

Through a special arrangement with Arhoolie Records, *American Routes* will also debut Oster's unissued recordings of a bebop band called the Knick-Knacks. Folklorists of Oster's era had a hard time accepting bebop as a folk tradition: they saw it as no longer linked to blues, gospel, and earlier community-based forms of jazz such as that heard in New Orleans and lionized by Alan Lomax's biography meets autobiography of and with

pianist Jelly Roll Morton. The reality that the Knick-Knacks were playing bebop—arguably the freest, most improvised jazz—while in Angola Prison is remarkable.

**Charles Neville**, the saxophonist and oral historian of the Neville Brothers, was a member of the Knick-Knacks during his imprisonment at Angola from 1963-67. He had been “sent up” to the dreaded place for possession of two marijuana cigarettes. He arrived with fear and ready to fight, quickly weaponized with a sharpened homemade shank for protection from other inmates, and soon witnessed the murder by trustee guards of a fellow inmate during the sugar cane harvest. But Charles Neville got out of the fields within sixty days of “intake” at Angola on the basis of his musical abilities. The librarian of the music room and record and book collection had been released. Neville got the position and would go on to become a teacher, bandleader, and autodidact. “Being in the music room and not having to work in the field...I could sit there and practice all day,” Neville told us in an in-depth interview we will feature on the program, “and that’s how I got my chops together.... When I got out and went to New York, I could go to the jam sessions and outplay anybody there because of my time at Angola” (interview 16/4/2016).

Neville’s interview will also help us explore the racial culture of Angola’s inmates. Neville helped to integrate the black and white musicians as they began to practice and play together first in the music room, then more publically in bands at parties and shows, including those at local high school proms, the annual Angola Rodeo and in other prisons for holiday events. Neville’s narratives of transforming black-white relations are heart-warming in the results he achieved through music and heart-wrenching in recalling the sting of racism and segregation in the rest of Angola then that still exists, but especially permeates the surrounding society.

The Knick-Knacks included two other noted New Orleans musicians: drummer James Black, who toured widely with the jazz flute and saxophone player Yusef Lateef, and pianist James Booker, the eclectic keyboard player who had taught now widely popular Harry Connick Jr.—the Orleans Parish D.A.’s son, when he was a trustee in the Parish prison—in free time provided at the family’s suburban home. The professional abilities and seriousness of the players like Black and Booker is enormously impressive. Another band pianist, John Prost, offered Charles Neville this critique of his music: “Man, you know, your playing is really cool but it’s too diatonic.... But I’ll tell you what you need to do, there’s this book, it’s called the *Linear Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization for Improvisation*, you need to get that book.” (Neville interview 16/4/16). Charles ordered the book.

Being a member of the Knick-Knacks carried huge prestige among the inmates and conveyed hope to the general inmate population who followed their exploits in the free world. Although the Knick-Knacks played standards for staff parties and occasional shows at local school dances or private parties for the warden, the idea that Angola prisoners could shift from bebop to performing pop standards for such dates was liberating for them as well. This role of the prison musician persists. **AJ “Oscar” Freeman** the lead guitarist for the Main Prison Gospel Band, said emphatically, “We

travel all over the state. It's a privilege you know...it let's me get out, mingle with the free people all the time...And you know, it's like I'm awake. Once you get out of prison man, it relieves a lot too."

Charles Neville will serve as a community scholar and as primary commentator for this program. Georgetown ethnomusicologist **Ben Harbert**, who is working on a book about bebop at Angola among other topics will be our primary academic humanist. We will also consult with: **Dr. Joyce Marie Jackson**, gospel scholar at LSU; and **Dr. Bruce Raeburn**, director of the Hogan Jazz Archive at Tulane who, in his support letter mentions playing for the prisoners in the 1980s.

Prison officials and the Angola Museum Board, which arranged for us to record 4 prison bands in 2016 and do initial interviews, has agreed to provide access for follow up interviews. We will also include music of other prisoners elsewhere, and topical songs such as Sam Cooke's "Chain Gang," and Johnny Cash's classic "Folsom Prison Blues," as well as our often sought archival interview with the late Merle Haggard regarding his time in San Quentin and the impact on him of hearing Cash in concert while there.



## **Crooked Roads Home: Vernacular Music and the Promise of Return**

“What people are seeking is not so much the home they left behind as a place that they feel they can change, a place in which their lives and strivings will make a difference—a place in which to *create* a home.”

— Carol Stack, *Call To Home: African Americans Reclaim the Rural South* (1996)

The “Great Migration” of African Americans from the rural south to the “Promised Land” of the urban north in the first half of the twentieth century often is described as the greatest peacetime movement of people across the American landscape. But over the past half century, that migration has been quietly eclipsed by the return of African Americans moving from north to south (Lemann 1991). This return migration is less discussed and documented, but it suggests revolutionary changes in American political and economic life. It also reflects a new African American understanding of home. In the words of the seminal hip hop group Arrested Development:

Past Dyesburg and Ripley  
Where the ghost of childhood haunts me  
Walk the roads my forefathers walked  
Climb the trees my forefathers hung from  
Ask those trees for all their wisdom  
They tell me my ears are so young. (Home)  
Go back, from whence you came (Home)  
My family tree, my family name (Home)  
For some strange reason it had to be (Home)  
He guided me to Tennessee. (Home)  
— “Tennessee,” Arrested Development (1992)

African Americans are not alone in reclaiming their historic homeplaces. White southerners too fled the rural south en masse during the first half of the twentieth century, moving to places like Detroit – but they have been moving back south now too. A former Kentuckian who had worked on a Detroit auto assembly line once told us during field interviews for a program about that city, “We may have lost the war, but we took Detroit with out firing a shot.” He went on to ruefully admit that the Detroit he came for – the one promising a secure job in the automobile industry – had now been lost as well. He may soon join the legions of white southerners who are returning, and reclaiming, the south as home.

This program will address these return migrations – emphasizing the hopes for cultural and economic revival that pull people home. Our special focus will be the return to Appalachia, and the explosion of interest there in old-time country music and Piedmont blues. The show will highlight the work of Joe Wilson, who is arguably the greatest single motivator of the huge cultural re-emergence of contemporary Appalachia, and also a force across the United States for musical representations of all kinds of local community cultures. Wilson would grin and laugh ironically when his friends called him

“America’s foremost hillbilly intellectual.” We will explore Wilson’s extraordinary “Crooked Road” project as both an enduring programmatic intervention, and a humane vision of culture as “life’s highway” that can carry you far away and then back home again.

We will travel along the mountain roads of Virginia’s portion of Appalachia, visiting homes, stores, and local festivals to examine the striking re-emergence of old-time country music among people under the age of thirty. Along this “Crooked Road,” the name Joe Wilson gave this region’s traditional music and culture, (Wilson 2006), one of our most remarkable interviews is with 12-year-old **Kitty Amaral**. Kitty lives in southwest Virginia, just down the road from Galax, the home of the famed Old Fiddle Convention that originated in 1935 and now draws over 10,000 people to the tiny hamlet each August. The home-schooled young woman plays with jaw-dropping virtuosity, subtle command of repertoire, and a passionate style. She calls to mind another prodigy from a generation before: the longbow fiddler and now country music star **Alison Krauss**. We will speak with Krauss, who is not a native of the region, but who is beloved in it for her instrumental abilities and as a model for young girls.

We’ll also speak with **Wayne Henderson**, a former postal route carrier and now internationally known luthier and guitarist from Mouth of Wilson, Virginia. But we will also speak with Henderson’s 30-year-old daughter **Jayne Henderson**. After a stint in environmental law at the University of Vermont, Jayne came home to take up the luthier’s craft of her father, making mandolins and other instruments in an ecologically sensitive way, not using endangered woods. We will interview too their friend the harmonica player **Phil Wiggins**, who grew up in Washington D.C., and often visited his grandparents in the South as a youth. Wiggins mentored with the late blues guitarist **John Cephas** from Bowling Green, Virginia (and with whom we have archival interviews), and now is a regular on the Southern folk festival circuit and often performs in the Blue Ridge.

Throughout, we will foreground the extraordinary life of **Joe Wilson** (1939-2015) and his “Crooked Road” project, which is now a Virginia state program for cultural and economic development. A native of Trade, Tennessee, Wilson was self-educated by mail order “Blue Books” of Shakespeare, the *Federalist Papers*, and voracious reading from the library book mobile that made it to his “holler.” Born to a Blue Ridge mountain farm family in an East Tennessee county that historically chose not to side with the Confederacy, Wilson hitchhiked away from his “holler” to Nashville as a teenager. Steeped in the enduring social justice perspective of New Deal populism of his region, Wilson would go on to be a door-to-door coffee salesman, manager for country singer Marty Robbins, a Civil Rights Labor organizer in Alabama in the 1960s, an adult graduate of Columbia Teacher’s College, and finally a Madison Avenue marketing executive. In 1976, he returned to his love of roots music and culture and took over the venerable but out-dated National Folk Festival (NFF), which was then being presented annually at the Wolf Trap Farm Park for the Performing Arts outside Washington, D.C. in Vienna, Virginia.

Wilson advocated for the deep traditions of the communities as he knew them; he also represented a progressive social pragmatism. He de-emphasized the NFF's penchant for the highly educated folk revival performers or "citybillies" who dressed in the clothes of mountain people, or white urbanites who played country blues. Asked why he did not want to continue to program the same singer-songwriters who inhabited the college coffeehouse circuit, Wilson jauntily said, "Why stimulate the over-stimulated?"

In his restless search for community-based deep cultural representatives, and discouraged with the National Park's groomed sylvan settlements for the event, Wilson moved the NFF out of Wolf Trap and into smaller cities for three-year runs of the Festival in new locales over the next three decades. He brought the festival to places like Bangor, Maine, Lowell, Massachusetts, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, Butte, Montana, and Richmond, Virginia – host cities in need of cultural revival but also rich in the survival of local culture. In doing so, Wilson drew on the NFF's founding impulses. The NFF was founded in 1934, and during that New Deal era, the early NFFs had featured Albert Gore Sr. as a mountain fiddler, the first Cajun dance musicians to play at a folk festival, Comanche Indian elders who had fought with Texas Rangers as the frontier faded, and Zora Neale Hurston, presenting black railroad "gandy dancers" from her hometown of Eatonville, Florida. Wilson also was inspired by leading figures from his region like Bascom Lamar Lunsford, a lawyer and fiddler who had helped found and program the first Mountain Dance and Folk Festival near Asheville, North Carolina in 1928. He was inspired too by Sarah Gertrude Knott, the Princeton, Kentucky native and Civilian Conservation Corps theater producer who had organized the first NFF around socially progressive, inclusive, traditionalist principles.

Wilson's formal title was Director of the National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA), a non-profit supported largely by the National Park Service and based in Washington. The NCTA became the new producing entity for the National Folk Festival. But rather than limiting the presentation of traditional music to the annual NFF, Wilson made it a year round activity. He developed now legendary thematic U.S. tours of cowboy singers, Irish musicians, Masters of the Folk Violin, Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, and Masters of the Steel-String Guitar tour. Wilson helped build the careers of artists like fiddler Alison Krauss and Piedmont bluesman John Cephas while pairing performers like Ricky Skaggs with Cajun and blues players on State Department tours to India and across the Pacific. Wilson's audio recordings from such a tour in the mid-1980s have Skaggs jamming on mandolin with a sitar player as a crowd in Varanasi cheered. During the 1990s, Wilson oversaw the American Roots Independence Day Concerts on the National Mall and live on NPR. He presented Alison Krauss alongside rockabilly innovator Carl Perkins, the Staple Singers, Otha Turner's Mississippi hill country fife-and-drum band playing "Glory Hallelujah," and timbales king Tito Puente. In doing so, he defined American patriotism as a celebration of democracy cultural pluralism.

After retirement, Wilson returned to his beloved Blue Ridge Mountains, settling on the New River in the tiny town of Fries, Virginia. From there he pulled the policy levers and used cultural showmanship to build the "Crooked Road" – now a model project for the State of Virginia – that features fiddlers and guitarists as young as the previously noted

Kitty Amaral or 11-year old 2015 Galax Convention first-place flatpicker Presley Barker alongside the most venerable octogenarians. Since Wilson passed away in 2015, a series of concerts in his name has brought artists he collaborated with over the years to the Blue Ridge Music Center that he helped to found on the Blue Ridge National Parkway. They have included country singer Ricky Skaggs; dobro-player (and Heritage Fellow) Jerry Douglas; Alison Krauss, blues harpists Phil Wiggins, Wayne Henderson and many others.

*American Routes* has and will continue to record those concerts, as well as interview Wilson's many supporters – from Congressmen and former Virginia Governor **Tim Kaine**, who supported the Crooked Road project enthusiastically, to elder backwoods players. We also have recorded the latest iterations of the still musically deep and diverse National Folk Festival (2015-17) in nearby Greensboro, North Carolina, which is home to Carolina Chocolate Drops co-founder **Rhiannon Giddens**. And we will interview a wide range of traditional musicians, organizers, politicians and more who knew and loved Wilson. Alongside our archival interviews with Wilson himself, these will help guide us along the “Crooked Road.”

**Dr. Jon Lohman** of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities that administers the Crooked Road project will serve as a humanities adviser. **Dr. Jessica Turner**, program director of the Birthplace of Country Music Museum in Bristol, Virginia will also advise.

The second half of the program will address the theme of return in an array of cultural communities across the South and beyond, focusing especially on Mexican and Afro-Creole communities. Many small Southern towns from Louisiana to Virginia have Mexican restaurants operated by migrants from the last generation who came to work in the agricultural fields. They followed an earlier post-World War II generation of Mexicans who came to work in the steel mills and related industries of Eastern Pennsylvania. But many of these migrants have begun to leave places like Chester and Pottstown to return to their old homes across Mexico. We will be assisted in tracking this reverse migration by ethnographer **Dr. Debra Lattanzi Shutika**, author of [\*Beyond the Borderlands: Migration and Belonging in the United States and Mexico\*](#) (2011). Her work explores the lives of Mexican immigrants and their American neighbors in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, and now their return in whole or part of the year to communities South of the border in Northern Mexico. We will locate recordings that address migration in traditional terms of the 1950s-70s like “Mojado sin licencia” (“Wetback Without a License”). We also will record current songs in the style of *La musica Norteña* in local clubs and cantinas on both ends of the trail. This music reflects the sense of a diasporic community, one now moving in both directions generationally.

*American Routes* host **Dr. Nick Spitzer** will revisit and update his work in the rural African French Creole communities of southwest Louisiana. During his fieldwork in the 1970s and 1980s, individuals and families were leaving Louisiana to work in Los Angeles and Oakland, taking jobs in shipyards and service work to the professions; now, they are returning with their life savings to buy 10 acres ranches and farms in their French-speaking Creole homeland. They have come back to be near families and their

land, to participate in trailrides and local Creole cowboy culture, which is infused with country zydeco music and annual *Courirs des Mardi Gras* (Mardi Gras runs on horseback). As grandparents, some take the role of passing Creole language, religion, music, cuisine and so on directly to grandchildren whose parents are drawn to day jobs in nearby towns and cities like Eunice, Lafayette, and Lake Charles. New forms of zydeco hip-hop compete in clubs with elders who play the source of Creole music called La-La at house parties and heritage festivals.

The program will be leavened by additional recordings about historic twentieth century and current ethnic and regional migration in American life, such as “Gran Texas” (various Cajun/Creole), “Do-Re-Mi” (Woody Guthrie, country folk), “Detroit City” (Bobby Bare with country version and Arthur Alexander with soul version), “Raza de Oro” (“Race of Gold,” about bilingual and bicultural Mexican-Americans in Northern California, written and sung by Los Cenzontles).

## **The Authentic Future: Promised Lands, Community Cultures, and the Survival of American Vernacular Pluralism**

This *American Routes* program will probe the fundamental tension in American cultural and community life: the competing pulls between continuity and change.

*American Routes* will tackle questions at the heart of the humanities: how is humane change possible? How do we disentangle beloved community traditions and sense of place from the legacies of inequality and exclusion that often helped to give them shape? How do we transform the past we inherit into the future that we wish to inhabit?

Informed by folklorist Henry Glassie's definition of tradition as "the creation of the future out of the past," this *American Routes* program will invite the audience to reflect on the importance of vernacular traditions in modern life. We will foreground the work of artists and culture bearers who have successfully balanced the desire for progress and creativity with the equally strong desire for connection to older values and folkways that have served to order a chaotic world.

We identify a common yearning for what we call an "authentic future" – the word "authentic" signaling not a false and limiting view of essentialized purity, but rather a collectively and confidently self-authored vision of who we are, and who we might yet become. Our conviction is that this sort of authenticity grows out of a rich and variegated sense of history – a past that provides the present with an expansive sense of possibility. Thus, this program asks, how can we construct and draw from a usable past in order to guide us towards an authentic future?

Our inquiry will take us to the foundation of the American political economy. The economic theorist Joseph Schumpeter famously characterized capitalism as "creative destruction." The vast majority of scholars to follow him have focused on the destructive – how the American political economy seems always to be "incessantly revolutioniz[ing] the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old, incessantly creating a new one." Schumpeter called this relentless change "the essential fact about capitalism." But *American Routes* offers a rebuttal, foregrounding processes of cultural creativity and continuity that have buffered communities in the throes of revolutionary change.

This program will provide a pluralistic portrait of American community life – constantly creolizing, creating the authentic future out of the usable past. In doing so, the program will make explicit the argument that undergirds much of the work *American Routes* has done for nearly two decades: that jazz, urban blues, soul, country music, rockabilly, and rock n' roll are best understood as the avant garde of American traditional culture. Tracing American "roots" and American "routes" – organic impulses towards cultural conservation, and the forward motion of emergent creativity – the program will demonstrate how rhythm and blues singers transformed Sunday morning gospel into

Saturday night dance music; and how country musicians reworked old songs for rural folk trying making their way in an urbanizing world.

The program will track too how rockabillys like Johnny Cash could mingle gospel tunes and arrangements, blues sound and sentiments, and country narrative to create new songs – songs like “Get Rhythm,” in which Cash uses a Southern Anglo narrative style to describe a shoe shine kid of color on a “windy corner of a dirty street” – far from Johnny’s rural place – to advise his white customer to “get rhythm when you get the blues.” In that moment, Cash breaks down racially-based styles and aesthetics of who tells a story, what they say, and let’s everyone who will listen know that music with rhythm can cure the spirit-crushing ills of everyday life. African Americans had (have) the experiential credibility to tell this tale.

The rock n’ roll that exploded out of rockabilly tales like “Get Rhythm,” or the blues cover “That’s Alright Mama” – which was backed on the flip side by the rocking up of a bluegrass tune, “Blue Moon of Kentucky,” Elvis’ first hit record in 1954 – reflected how the comingling of racial communities was possible, first, in by those special crossover men in the aesthetic realm. The larger social realm would follow after black folks added electricity, and electrifying small ensembles, to amplify the style and messages of the previous generation of solo acoustic country bluesman. The early white rock and rollers sought out African American river baptisms – as Elvis did near Tupelo, Mississippi – and snuck into the black clubs like Haney’s Big House – as Jerry Lee Lewis did in Ferriday, Louisiana; they went in search of music, and in doing so, they lead their own communities as kind of avant vernacular clarions.

Segregation was still the law in public, but no one stopped a huge Southern white youth audience from listening to the black R & B radio station WDIA from Memphis, or black listeners and musicians like Ray Charles, Al Green, or Charlie Pride from tuning into the Grand Ol’ Opry from Nashville on a battery-powered radio for their Saturday night entertainment. Rock and roll from Memphis, like jazz from New Orleans, spread wildly and widely. It changed how Americans thought about themselves in flesh and spirit. Eventually, it conveyed that growing freedom to the world in the late 1950s though the Cold War and our “cultural revolution” of the 1960s and ‘70s.

These instances of community creolization have resounded around the world, and they offer compelling models of how to call on the past to suit the needs of the present. They are just a few demonstrations of the possibility of humane cultural transformation from pain and conflict to the pleasures of an expanding – but still not fully realized – freedom.

The folklorist **Henry Glassie** will consult with *American Routes* to help enliven our understanding of tradition or, in his words, “the many ways people convert the old into the new.” The historian **Glenda Gilmore** will advise the program on the history, memory, and collective imagination of Southerners — black and white — who migrated to the North. More broadly, she and historian **Andy Horowitz** will help us theorize the concept of a “usable past”: the idea that we as scholars and citizens must always reimagine our past in the present in order to serve the future. **Bill Ferris** will draw on his

decades of fieldwork and his service as the chairman of the NEH to help us contextualize the importance of the humanities in public life. They will join anthropologist **Richard Kurin**, the Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture at the Smithsonian, who will help us imagine the future of cultures and communities in American and ultimately global life. We will add appropriate comments on American life from our archival interviews with late artists including **Ray Charles, Merle Haggard, Jerry Garcia** and **Allen Toussaint** as well living interviewees **Rhiannon Giddens** (Carolina Chocolate Drops), **Mavis Staples**, and **Randy Newman** among others.

One segment will focus on the enduring trope of the “Promised Land.” The idea of America as a “shining city on the hill” has pervaded American culture for four centuries, and the program will survey utopian visions in song that reflect how communities have adapted their American dreams for diverse needs and different times. We will listen to examples that range from Reverend F. W. McGee’s exultant 1930 recording of “Fifty Miles of Elbow Room,” a vision of the New Jerusalem as African American agrarian Manifest Destiny, to Bruce Springsteen’s 1978 “Promised Land,” with its lonely white male protagonist’s yearning to escape the urban alienation of Main Street.

Another segment will focus on the emergence and endurance of traditional forms amidst the seemingly avant garde. From children’s rhymes quoted in hip hop to work song rhythms framing contemporary pop, we will survey the connections artists make between their “roots” and their “routes.” We will listen, for example, to accounts from our archives of future country music star **Willie Nelson’s** first public performances at nine years old with a Bohemian Polka band in early 1940s Texas; he drew on those polka rhythms as he gave shape to modern country music, a sound already inflected by **Bob Wills Texas Playboys’** combined use of Southern fiddle tunes and New Orleans jazz to fashion Western swing. St. Louis native **Chuck Berry** would in turn hear the jazzed up square dance that had become Wills’ hit “Ida Red” and recast it at Chess Records in Chicago as somewhere between black R & B and a sped-up white country dance rhythm in a song about a woman named “Maybelline”...a name he took from a cosmetic box randomly left on a studio shelf.

We will hear also examples of knowing winks that offered stabilizing references in what could be chaotic modernity – as when Jewish songsmiths **Jerry Leiber** (Baltimore) and **Mike Stoller** (New York City) met in Los Angeles in the late 1940s and eventually used the antic style of Yiddish theater to fashion short songs for black artists such as “Smokey Joe’s Café” (The Robins) and “Hound Dog” (Big Mama Thornton) among many other hits.

Throughout the program, we will stay attuned to such artists who have been exemplary American creolizers, transforming the past into the present. We will listen, for example, to archival Library of Congress recordings of the young sharecropper McKinley Morganfield playing “Country Blues” on his acoustic guitar in 1941 in a Mississippi cotton field for Alan Lomax of the Library of Congress, and then hear him a decade later, after his migration to Chicago, using the name **Muddy Waters**, playing the same songs on an electric guitar – louder, faster, bolder, transforming the blues tradition to adapt to



his new urban reality. We'll listen too to Waters' "Catfish Blues," played on solo guitar inflected with the hammer and twang of the diddley bow – itself with West African origins – in the single string playing of Islamic-inflected scales that would become the "blue notes" of the blues, all backing up his tough vocal personal creation myth as a special "boy child" who would one day be a "rolling stone." Rolling stone – British invaders took that name as cover for their return to America with our diamond rough crown jewels amped up like never before, as did a magazine that had heard this cultural news that the "good rockin' tonight" would shake the whole world from the Deep South to the Iron Curtain seeking a dance for freedom.

In contrast to Muddy's seminal bravado, Hank Williams, the Alabama country singer-songwriter (and sufferer who died at 29 from booze, pills and loss of will), sang Blind Leon Payne's lyrics to "Lost Highway" with Southern Calvinism's very different take on a man as a "rolling stone":

I'm a **rolling stone** all alone and lost  
For a life of sin I have paid the cost,  
When I pass by all the people say  
Just another guy on the lost highway.

That sense of loss and that "we're on a road to nowhere" also has a place in American popular culture both tragically iconic and mildly ironic. David Byrne sang the latter line. "Lost Highway" (based on Hank's singing) became a record label and radio show. The Stones to their credit also imported American country music's aesthetic of sinful regret into their songs of dissolute and decadent behavior like the driver of the car running red lights in Southern migrant-filled Bakersfield, California, in "The Girl with the Far Away Eyes." On *American Routes* the resulting three-song *segué* set is a favorite:

"Catfish Blues" Muddy Waters  
"Lost Highway" Hank Williams  
"The Girl with the Far Away Eyes" Rolling Stones

The listeners create their own affect and will to provide an emotional and intellectual interpretation of the differences in cultural meanings between the black and white Southern blues and country, and British blues country rock. We count on listeners and listening in general for all of us to limn the authentic future out of what we learn from the past and its cultural transformations in many more layers of complexity than a few songs in sequence--but those songs help us go down the road in informed style.

The tales of American cultural unity and diversity still abound in the current era as "the beat goes on" when a young African American stringband like the Carolina Chocolate Drops recovers African roots and American branches of the banjo and Piedmont country dance music. Or when Bob Dylan recycles the country blues as universalist poetry. Yet, we have never realized fully what *E pluribus unum* ("out of many, one") suggests. But maybe that is for the best, because we should heed, too, Ralph Ellison's observation that, "America is woven of many strands. I would recognize them and let it so remain."

The creative tension between the usable past and the authentic future – and between the differential freedoms and needs of the one and the many – is where a pluralistic democratic society lives. It's the intangible place of creative freedom where we can continue on in our pursuit of a "more perfect union." In 2018, *American Routes* will culminate twenty years on public radio, offering a modest aesthetic and semantic soundtrack that comments on and celebrates that gathering place. Thank you for joining us in the cultural conversation and on the journey!

## **Attachment 4**

### ***American Routes***

Exploring & Expressing the  
Vernacular Humanities in Story & Song

### **Digital Design**

**American Routes Website Component**

*American Routes*  
**Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities  
in Story & Song  
Digital Design**

**American Routes Website Component**  
<http://americanroutes.org/>

The American Routes home page shows a brief description of the show playing nationwide for the week along with an appropriate image. There is also a link to a featured interview, "find a station" feature, and links to various other areas.

The American Routes website, hosted by the New Orleans public radio station at the University of New Orleans, WWNO, has allowed us the luxury of giving all of our users the access to a listenable full archive with photographs and in-depth playlist information and individual artist interviews on demand. The site offers a decade and a half of programs and features available for streaming. Users can browse by date or topic. They can also browse by artist and listen to artist interviews separate from the produced programs.

WWNO's legal status as a public radio station under the Corporation for Public Broadcasting rules has finally allowed us as a program producer to "stream" all content. Presently, we are exploring ways to provide downloadable podcasts under a broad licensing agreement. Requests for a regular podcast make up a large share of comments from our listeners; however, since podcast end-users legally take possession of a copy of the program, the nature of our productions does not currently permit such access. Therefore, we would need to put a licensing agreement in place first, as well as provide for increases in network bandwidth. One item that will make the full archive of the program more widely available is the development an iPhone application. At the present moment, we have enabled a mobile web version of our website which allows the program to be streamed both from iPhones and Android devices.

The site also features "Deep Roots," "Photo Gallery" and "Recent News" sections which offer topical articles, academic presentations, and photos which allow listeners to engage more deeply with the show. Budgetary and staffing constraints have allowed these pages to lag somewhat, but, with funding, we plan to renew our focus on this added content.

The website is also equipped with social networking share links per show, which add more accessibility to its contextual and educational fabric.



## Wade in the Water: Songs and Stories of the River

July 29th, 2015 - August 5th, 2015

As the muddy Mississippi winds its way past us in New Orleans, we're reminded of the power and place of these waterways in American culture. First, we seek the source of the mighty river at the headwaters in Minnesota. Then listen to stories of steamboat captains, riverboats and rural fishermen. And learn about New Orleans own relation to the river with Tulane professor Richard Campanella. Plus river tales from Captain Doc Hawley, Aaron Neville and Al Green.

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### Featured Archive Spotlight



#### Nancy Wilson

##### Interview:

Chillicothe, Ohio's Nancy Wilson shrugged off a small-town upbringing to become one of the most celebrated jazz singers of the early '60s, collaborating with alto sax man Cannonball Adderly and pianist George Shearing for the Capitol label. The vocalist

branched...

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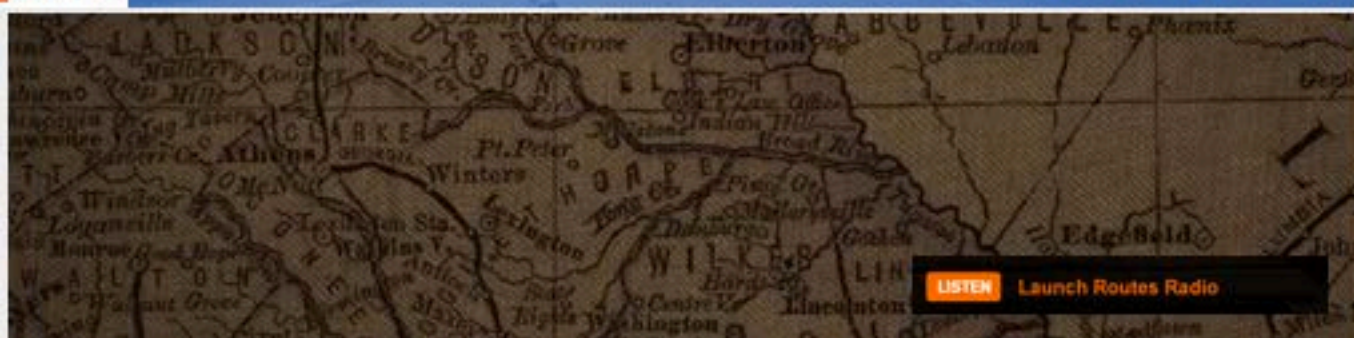
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## About American Routes

*"In the history of American radio, no series has come close to Nick Spitzer's American Routes in exploring the many streams of this nation's music."*  
— Nat Hentoff, Wall Street Journal

*American Routes* is a weekly two-hour public radio program produced in New Orleans, presenting a broad range of American music — blues and jazz, gospel and soul, old-time country and rockabilly, Cajun and zydeco, Tejano and Latin, roots rock and pop, avant-garde and classical. Now in our 15th year on the air, *American Routes* explores the shared musical and cultural threads in these American styles and genres of music — and how they are distinguished.

The program also presents documentary features and artist interviews. Our conversations include Willie Nelson, Tom Waits, B.B. King, Dr. John, Dave Brubeck, Abbey Lincoln, Elvis Costello, Ray Charles, Randy Newman, McCoy Tyner, Lucinda Williams, Rufus Thomas, Jerry Lee Lewis and many others. Join us as we ride legendary trains, or visit street parades, instrument-makers, roadside attractions and juke joints, and meet tap dancers, fishermen, fortunetellers and more.

The songs and stories on *American Routes* describe both the community origins of our music, musicians and cultures — the "roots" — and the many directions they take over time — the "routes."

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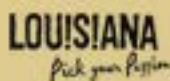
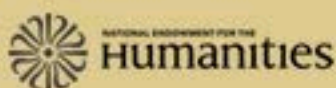
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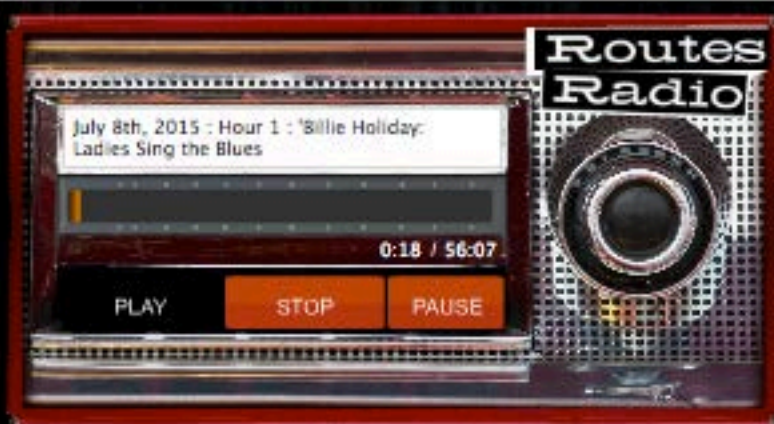


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**Giants of Jazz: Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane**[Listen To Hour 1](#)[Listen To Hour 2](#)[View Full Playlist](#)

## NOW PLAYING

**JULY 8TH, 2015****Billie Holiday: Ladies Sing the Blues & Beyond--with Singers Cassandra Wilson and Catherine Russell**

For Billie Holiday's centennial celebration, we follow her from her beginnings through a complex life of troubles and musical triumphs, her compelling "autumn" voice and untimely passing at age 44. Biographers John Szwed and Robert O'Meally discuss Lady Day's style and significance, while Cassandra Wilson describes and sings her approach to the Billie Holiday oeuvre. Singer Catherine Russell describes reaching back to recreate classic blues and jazz. From our archives we hear Nina Simone and Bonnie Raitt praising their blues heroines in story and song.

[Listen To Hour 1](#)[Listen To Hour 2](#)[View Full Playlist](#)



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JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN **JUL** AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

July 29th, 2015

Wade in the Water: Songs and Stories of the River



As the muddy Mississippi winds its way past us in New Orleans, we're reminded of the power and place of these waterways in American culture. First, we seek the source of the mighty river at the headwaters in Minnesota. Then listen to stories of steamboat captains, riverboats and rural fisherman. And learn about New Orleans own relation to the river with Tulane professor **Richard Campanella**. Plus river tales from **Captain Doc Hawley**, **Aaron Neville** and **Al Green**.

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July 22nd, 2015

Van Dyke Parks &amp; Tom McDermott



Conversation with and music from **Van Dyke Parks**, an eclectic, popular classicist known as a composer and keyboardist, arranger and producer, with a great love of calypso and Hawaiian cowboy music. The man behind the curtain for so many artists, the Hollywood-based Parks is well-regarded for writing and studio work with Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys, Ry Cooder, Lowell George and Randy Newman, among many. He recently became a fan of pianist **Tom McDermott**, a St. Louis-born, New Orleans-dwelling and Brazilian-influenced vernacular virtuoso. Parks thought enough of McDermott's recorded repertoire to collect and reissue some of it as *Bamboula* -- so named for the composition by the mutually-admired New Orleans 19th century pianist Louis Moreau Gottschalk. Tom McDermott, also a fan of Scott Joplin, Jelly Roll Morton, Professor Longhair and James Booker, plays in his parlor for us.

[Listen To Hour 1](#)[Listen To Hour 2](#)[View Full Playlist](#)

July 15th, 2015

Giants of Jazz: Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane



For this special *American Routes* program, we follow the lives of two giants of jazz: **Thelonious Monk** and **John Coltrane**. From their humble North Carolina beginnings to their triumphs on the world stage, we'll trace their individual and inspired paths to creativity. And we'll visit with the musicians who played with the greats, including **McCoy Tyner** and **Pharoah Sanders**, and the next generation, **TS Monk** and **Ravi Coltrane**.

[Listen To Hour 1](#)[Listen To Hour 2](#)[View Full Playlist](#)

July 8th, 2015

Billie Holiday: Ladies Sing the Blues &amp; Beyond--with Singers Cassandra Wilson and Catherine Russell



For **Billie Holiday**'s centennial celebration, we follow her from her beginnings through a complex life of troubles and musical triumphs, her compelling "autumn" voice and untimely passing at age 44. Biographers **John Szwed** and **Robert O'Meally** discuss Lady Day's style and significance, while **Cassandra Wilson** describes and sings her approach to the Billie Holiday oeuvre. Singer **Catherine Russell** describes reaching back to recreate classic blues and jazz. From our archives we hear **Nina Simone** and **Bonnie Raitt** praising their blues heroines in story and song.

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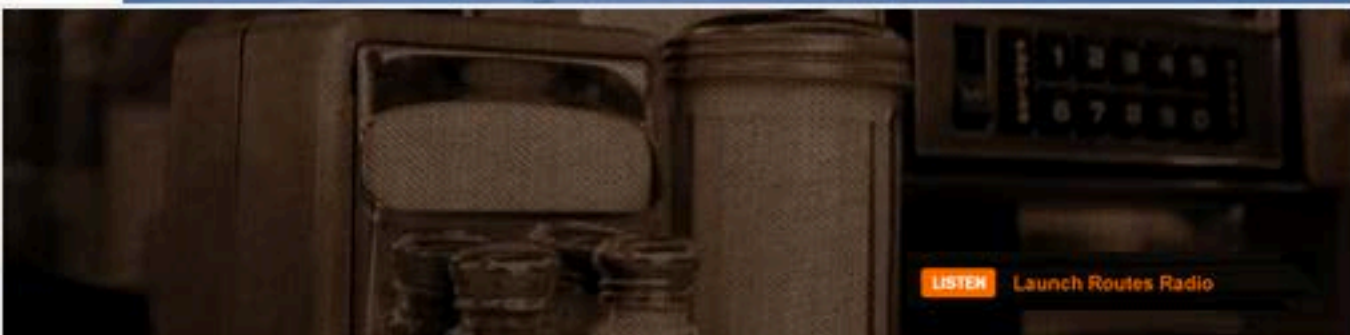
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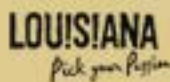
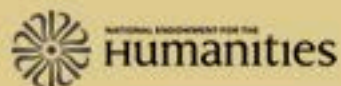
## Photo Gallery

1 of 82

Allen Toussaint, Dr. John and the Dalai Lama at Tulane Commencement 2013 (May 2013, taken by Sally Asher, Tulane Communications)


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[Media Kit](#)
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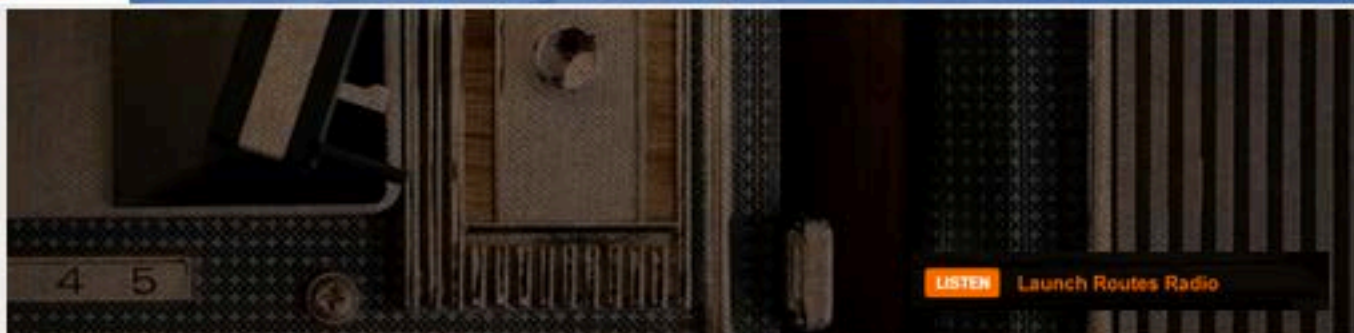
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## Recent News

NEA's Adam Kampe Talks With Nick Spitzer About *American Routes Abroad*

May 28th, 2014 – By Adam Kampe

[Listen Here...](#)

NEA grantee *American Routes* has been on the air for almost 16 years, educating and entertaining audiences about all sorts of American music and cultural heritage. Now Nick Spitzer, folklorist, professor, and the show's host, has taken the show on the road... and we ain't talking Route 66. Right now, Spitzer is in China with NEA National Heritage Fellow Chuck Campbell, a sacred steel guitarist, as part of his *American Routes Abroad* program, which takes a wide range of American musicians to countries around the world. In light of the latest issue of NEA Arts, which focuses on the broad reach of arts across continents, we looked to this riveting initiative to keep the international conversation going. [Listen here...](#)

## American Routes: Songs and Stories from the Road



May 1st, 2014 –

*American Routes* is celebrating its 12th anniversary on the air with the release of **American Routes: Songs and Stories From the Road**, a double CD collection of favorite interviews and stories from a decade of programs. From mambo kings and country sweethearts to cool pianomen and sidewalk steppers, you'll find the iconic mix of voices and music you hear each week on *American Routes*. East Coast songmen **Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller** reminisce about their years as songwriters for Elvis and others. **Dolly Parton** shares her love of east Tennessee while **Tom Waits** talks about his various inspirations, including his kids' toys. Young Cajun band **Feuollet** explains why Cajun music is cool despite what their friends think. Many of the interviews on *Songs and Stories* capture the voices of beloved musicians who have passed on, including **Jerry Garcia**, **Rufus Thomas**, **Tito Puente** and **Nina Simone**. Join us as we visit the **Antique Radio Museum** in St. Louis. Spend a day at **Sea Breeze**, North Carolina, to learn about the origins of beach music. Then, we'll jump with the **Treme Sidewalk Steppers and Rebirth Brass Band** for a post-Katrina second line.

After starting back in 1998 broadcasting on only 7 stations, *American Routes* is now heard by nearly 400,000 listeners on 195 outlets across the country. With 10 years of programs in the archive, it was a challenge to choose from the many interviews we've done over the years. And with exciting programs to come, we look forward to even more miles with the radio turned on. For more information

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## **Appendix 2**

### ***American Routes: Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story & Song***

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# **Attachment**

## ***American Routes***

**Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular**

**Humanities in Story & Song**

**Letters of Support and Vitae Selected  
Staff and Advisors**



## Selected American Routes Media Team

## Nicholas Randolph Spitzer

Nick Spitzer is a folklorist recognized for his work with community-based cultures of the Gulf South, American music, cultural creolization, documentary arts and public policy. He is the producer of public radio's *American Routes*, a two-hour program devoted to vernacular music and cultures, heard on 300 stations. Spitzer is a professor of anthropology at Tulane University. His B.A. in anthropology is from the University of Pennsylvania and Ph.D. in anthropology and folklore is from the University of Texas.

Dr. Spitzer researched and edited *Louisiana Folklife: A Guide to the State* (1985), as well as the *Mississippi Delta Ethnographic Overview* (1979) for the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park. In 1986 he wrote the seminal *Zydeco and Mardi Gras: Performance Genres and Identity in Rural Creole Louisiana* for the National Park Service. Spitzer's writings appear in *American Anthropologist*, *Journal of American Folklore*, *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* and *Encyclopedia of World Cultures*. He co-edited *Public Folklore* (1997, 2007), used in graduate cultural programs and translated into Mandarin. He co-authored *Blues for New Orleans: Mardi Gras and America's Creole Soul* (2006).

Spitzer founded the Louisiana Folklife Program. His work as State Folklorist generated research, programs and publications that brought new understanding to traditional cultures, including the well-regarded Louisiana Folklife Pavilion at the 1984 World's Fair. From 1985-89, Spitzer was the senior folklore specialist at the Smithsonian's Center for Cultural Heritage. Nick curated programs at the Festival of American Folklife and produced cultural documentaries for *Radio Smithsonian*. As a National Council for the Traditional Arts board member, he helped produce the National Folk Festival.

Spitzer's radio experience began as program director of WXPB-FM, then a drive-time host on Philadelphia's WMMR-FM, "underground radio" of the 1970s, and Austin's alt-country originator KOKE FM. He has produced or annotated dozens of recordings of music from across America. As a commentator on culture for National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* (1989-2000), he extended the human conversation about the aesthetic and cultural life of communities. From 1990-95 Nick was a research associate with the Smithsonian and served as artistic director of *Folk Masters*, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) award-winning concert series that he established at Carnegie Hall. The *Folk Masters* performances now encompass an archive of over 175 traditional artists of the last half-century. In 1996 Spitzer was a visiting scholar at the School for Advanced Research in Santa Fe NM. Nick hosts and co-produces the annual NEA Heritage Fellows concert for *American Routes*.

Nick Spitzer received the Benjamin Botkin Lifetime Award in Public Folklore from the American Folklore Society (2002). He was Mellon Humanities Professor at Tulane (2004) and received the New Orleans Arts Award and named American Folklore Society Fellow in 2005. Spitzer was also Humanist of the Year for recovery work after Hurricane Katrina and co-produced and annotated the CD *Our New Orleans 2005: A Benefit Album* for Habitat for Humanity. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2007 to research traditional creativity in Creole communities. The 2013 James Williams Rivers Prize recipient for contributions to Louisiana culture Spitzer, teaches ethnography of performance in the Gulf South and public

folklore at Tulane . He has lectured in the US and China on cultural resilience in recovery from natural, manmade and economic catastrophes, and received a Taiji Traditional Music Award for cultural documentation and dissemination from the PRC's National Conservatory of Music. In 2013 Nick co-convened: "Intangible Cultural Heritage Policies & Practices for Safeguarding Traditional Cultures—Comparing China and the United States" at the School for Advanced Research. Recent *American Routes Abroad* tours of New Orleans traditional jazz, cowboy, Cajun, gospel steel and Tex-Mex music in China grew from these discussions.

**Emily Botein, contributing producer**, is an independent radio producer based in New York, who helped launch PRI's The Next Big Thing in 1999 and served as its senior producer. Since 2005, she has worked with a range of shows and institutions, including American Radioworks, American Routes, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Studio 360, National Public Radio and Weekend America. Before radio, Ms. Botein worked for seven years on local and national folklore programming initiatives, at the Smithsonian Institution, the Brooklyn Arts Council and the Center for Traditional Music and Dance.

**Matt Sakakeeny, Ph.D., contributing producer**, has worked with American Routes since 1997 and is currently an Assistant Professor of Music at Tulane University. Matt recently completed his PhD in Ethnomusicology at Columbia University. His dissertation, "Instruments of Power: New Orleans Brass Bands and the Politics of Performance," considers the brass band as a powerful symbol of local black culture. Research in New Orleans was facilitated by a fieldwork grant from the National Science Foundation and a writing fellowship from the Whiting Foundation. Matt has published in the journals *Current Musicology*, *Space and Culture*, and *Allegro*, contributed to *Mojo* and *Wax Poetics* magazines, and filed reports for public radio's *All Things Considered*, *Marketplace*, and *WWOZ's Street Talk*. He first moved to New Orleans as the co-producer of *American Routes* and he continues to serve as Senior Contributing Producer.

**Margaret Howze, contributing producer**, is a 15-year veteran of NPR where she was a senior producer for cultural programs. Ms. Howze produced the Peabody-award winning 26-part series *Making the Music*, hosted by Wynton Marsalis. She also produced documentaries on Nat King Cole, Louis Armstrong, Hank Williams, and Mary Lou Williams among others, and served as music producer for the weekly live program *Anthem*. She received a second Peabody award as senior producer for NPR's long-running *Jazz Profiles*, and a Gracie Allen Award for her two-part series on "Women in Jazz". Howze has contributed to *American Routes* for the last seven years, combining her abilities as features producer and digital editor with a strong knowledge of recorded American vernacular music—especially jazz and rhythm and blues.

**Elena Martínez, contributing producer**, has been a staff folklorist at City Lore since 1997 where she has curated exhibits, organized public programs, founded the *Drum Calls!* series, done research/fieldwork for *Place Matters* and other projects. She oversees the City Lore image archives and coordinated the City Lore Documentary Institute. Her efforts included getting Casa Amadeo (the longest continually-run Latin music store in NYC and the first Puerto Rican site on the mainland included in the Register) nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. She also successfully nominated master Puerto Rican lacemaker Rosa Elena Egipciano for a NEA National Heritage Award. For the past 4 years Elena been

the Co-Artistic Director of the Bronx Music Heritage Center (sponsored by the Woman's Housing & Economic Development Corporation), a gallery and performance space which presents programs exploring and celebrating the Bronx's musical and artistic legacy.

**Gwen Thompkins, contributing producer**, is a New Orleans native, NPR veteran and host of WWNO's *Music Inside Out*, where she brings to bear the knowledge and experience she amassed as senior editor of Weekend Edition, an East Africa correspondent, the holder of Nieman and Watson Fellowships, and as a longtime student of music from around the world.

**Lauren Callihan, program associate**, has served as the program associate for *American Routes* since its inception. Ms. Callihan, who holds an M.A. in Communications from Louisiana State University, assists Nick Spitzer in managing American Routes from development, contractual, budgetary and timeline perspectives.

**Garrett Pittman, program assistant**, earned a B.A. in History and Anthropology with a Minor in Latin American Studies from Tulane University. In May of 2011, he received an M.A. in US History from Tulane, with concentrations in 20th Century social movements, economic history and Southern history. He is originally from Lumberton, North Carolina. As a Program Assistant at American Routes, he is charged with research and some digital content production. In addition, he hosts a weekly blues/R&B radio show and volunteers as the Blues Music Director at WTUL New Orleans.

## Humanities Advisors

To the NEH Review Panel for "The Sound of Pluralism: Music as Cultural Identity in New York City Neighborhoods",

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for American Routes and its "The Sound of Pluralism: Music as Cultural Identity in New York City Neighborhoods". This program will provide a fresh and incisive, deeply contextualized perspective on musical pluralism. Through exploring ethnic performing traditions adapted and transformed in New York City, the program will demonstrate how music embodies cultural resilience. It will open new vistas for understanding ethnic and immigrant communities through illuminating how their music embodies multiple cultural influences while serving as emblematic of distinctive ethnic and immigrant groups.

American Routes will be working closely with cultural organizations and scholars with decades of experience documenting, interpreting and presenting New York ethnic and immigrant traditions. Their involvement will be invaluable for a program with a scope that encompasses traditions developed in earlier waves of immigration as well as current musical practices of recent immigrants. These traditions are practiced in highly diverse neighborhoods, to audiences from the communities originating these traditions as well as neighbors and general audiences of diverse cultural backgrounds. Their broad appeal, diverse cultural sources and dynamism are of particular significance at a fraught moment in our nation's attitudes towards immigration and cultural difference.

American Routes is the preeminent national vernacular music program in any broadcast medium. It is distinguished by its high production values, outstanding aesthetic standards and strong academic foundation. It is remarkably effective in interpreting vernacular music in a manner that is accessible, engrossing and never pedantic. Like other American Routes programs, "The Sound of Pluralism: Music as Cultural Identity in New York City Neighborhoods" will prominently feature the voices of members of the communities whose traditions are represented, including scholars, performers and community cultural activists -- with some participants possessing all of these roles.

I have collaborated with Dr. Nick Spitzer for over 25 years, beginning with our joint editing of *Public Folklore*, a foundational work in the study of public folklore and intangible cultural heritage. Since that time our collaborations have included joint lectures in China, organizing a seminar at the School of Advanced Research in Santa Fe on public folklore and intangible cultural heritage with scholars from the US and China, and producing with Chinese colleagues at Yunnan University a conference in China involving scholars from the US and five East Asian countries. Dr. Spitzer's great gift for cultural translation were of inestimable value in these collaborations. He is exceptionally successful in interpreting traditions across cultural boundaries to colleagues in other countries as well as among regional and ethnic communities throughout the US. In my capacity as Director of the Folk Arts Program of the New York State Council on the Arts, I frequently exchange ideas with Dr. Spitzer on issues of cultural policy, documentation and the production of cultural programming that includes the groups to be featured in "The Sound of Pluralism: Music as Cultural Identity in New York City Neighborhoods." I am thrilled that this important program relating to New York City will be broadcast to a national audience, produced and interpreted with broad resonances for communities everywhere in the US.

Robert Baron, Ph.D.

## **ROBERT BARON**

Curriculum Vitae

(b) (6)

### **EDUCATION**

Ph.D., M.A. Folklore and Folklife  
University of Pennsylvania

A.B., Major: Anthropology  
University of Chicago

### **ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

#### **Goucher College**

Instructor, Masters Program in Cultural Sustainability 2011-

Teach cultural policy course and independent study courses which have included sociolinguistics and dialogism in cultural practice. Supervise master student theses and capstone projects.

#### **New York State Council on the Arts**

Folk Arts Director 1985-2000, 2001 -; Music Program Director 2012 -; Special Arts Services Director 2010-12, Museum Program Director 1996-2000. Arts Program Analyst 1980-85

Founding Director of the Folk Arts Program, which supports the documentation, presentation, interpretation and safeguarding of folk arts. Act as spokesperson for the Council, formulate policy, administer grants process, organize convenings and direct internship program for graduate students. Due to staff shortages, periodically direct other programs with comparable administrative and policy responsibilities.

#### **National Endowment for the Humanities**

Folklore Administrator 2000-2001

Researched and analyzed past support for folklore by NEH, recommended new directions for its involvement with folklore. Informed folklore field about funding opportunities and developed framework for interagency collaborations.

#### **Brooklyn Museum**

Senior Research Specialist, Education Division – 1977-79

Researched, conducted field research and organized interpretive programming for Haitian Art Exhibition. Produced Haitian folklife festival. Planned museum education activities for other special exhibitions.

### **AWARDS, GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

Fellow, American Folklore Society – 2013-; Japan Foundation – Short-Term Research Fellowship - 2010; Morioka University – Visiting Researcher– 2010; Fulbright Senior Specialist, U.S. Studies – Folklore - University of Turku, Finland – 2005; College of St. Benilde/De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines – 2009; Asian Cultural Council — 2008; Smithsonian Institution – Fellowship in Museum Practice, Smithsonian Center for Education and Museum Studies – 2006-10; Harvard University Non-Resident Fellow, W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African-American Research – 2004-08; Benjamin A. Botkin Prize for Outstanding Achievement in Public Folklore, American Folklore Society – 2002; Wenner-Gren Foundation – Grant for research on folklore and ethnic boundaries in St. Lucia - 1976

### **BOARD AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP, SERVICE TO PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Fund for Folk Culture – Board of Directors - 2000-06, Middle Atlantic Folklife Association – President 1993-95; American Folklore Society – State of the Profession Committee - 1992-94, Task Force on Cultural Diversity – 1994-2000, Nominating Committee member - 1996-98, Chair - 1998; Membership Committee - 2000, Executive Board - 2000, Chair Annual Meeting Program Committee – 2002; Pew Charitable Trusts – Folklife domain group for Innovations in State Cultural Policy – 2001; National Council for the Traditional Arts – Board of Directors 1992-2001; Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation – Board of Directors, 1994-96

### **EDITORIAL BOARDS**

Journal of American Folklore – 2010-15; Museum Anthropology – 2005-09

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

### Books

*Creolization as Cultural Creativity* (with Ana Cara.). University Press of Mississippi, Jackson. 2011.

*Public Folklore*. (ed., with Nick Spitzer) University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, 2007. (Second Edition, first published Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992).

*Afro-American Folk Culture: An Annotated Bibliography*, (with John F. Szwed and Roger D. Abrahams). Institute for the Study of Human Issues, Philadelphia, 1978.

### Chapters in Books, Peer Reviewed Academic Journal Articles

"Mediating and Immediating at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival," in *Curatorial Conversations: Cultural Representation and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival*, Olivia Cadaval, Sojin Kim and Diana N'Diaye, eds. University Press of Mississippi, In Press.

"Public Folklore Dialogism and Critical Heritage Studies." Accepted for publication in *International Journal of Heritage Studies*.

"States of the Folklore Profession in China and the United States: A Trialogue." (with Kang Baocheng and Wang Dun). *Journal of American Folklore*, 27 (2014): 264-284.

"'I Saw Mrs. Saray, Sitting on a Bombalerry' – Ralph Ellison Collects Children's Folklore in Harlem," in *New York State Folklife Reader: Diverse Voices*, Elizabeth Tucker and Ellen McHale, eds. University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, 2013.

"American Public Folklore: Issues, Practices and Prospects." (Article in Japanese, "ロバート・バロン「アメリカにおける公共民俗学—その課題・実践・展望—」、『日本民俗学』") *Bulletin of the Folklore Society of Japan* 273 (2013): 96-127.

"'All Power to the Periphery': The Public Folklore Thought of Alan Lomax." *Journal of Folklore Research*, 49 (2012): 275-317.

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"American Public Folklore: History, Issues, Challenges." *Indian Folklore Research Journal* 5 (2008): 65-86. Chinese translation published in *Cultural Heritage*, Sun Yat-sen University, 1 (2010): 86-96.

"Reinventing a State Funding Program for Museums," *Curator* 46 (2003): 19-35.

"Theorizing Public Folklore Practice – Documentation, Genres of Representation, and Everyday Competencies," *Journal of Folklore Research*, 36 (1999): 185-201. Translated as "Die Theorie der Praxis von 'Public Folklore': Dokumentation, Genres der Repräsentation und Alltagskompetenzen," trans. Regina Bendix and Gisela Welz, *Kulturanthropologie*, (Frankfurt am Main) 70 (2002): 131-159.

"Multi Paradigm Discipline, Inter-Disciplinary Field, Peering Through and Around the Interstices," *Western Folklore*, 52 (1993): 227-246.

"Folklife and the American Museum," in *Folklife and Museums: Selected Readings*, Patricia Hall and Charles Seeman, eds., pp. 12-26. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1987. (Revised and expanded version of article published in *Museum News* 59 (March/April 1981): 46 - 50, 58, 60, 64.)

"Syncretism and Ideology: Latin New York Salsa Musicians," *Western Folklore* 36 (1977): 209-225.





UNC

CENTER FOR THE STUDY  
OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH

THE UNIVERSITY  
of NORTH CAROLINA  
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August 6, 2016

Nicholas R. Spitzer  
Professor of Anthropology and American Studies  
Producer of *American Routes*  
Alcee Fortier Studios  
Tulane University  
New Orleans LA 70118

Dear Nick

It is with special pleasure that I write to strongly support your public radio program *American Routes* and your updated NEH proposal "*American Routes--Expressing and Exploring the Vernacular Humanities in Story and Song.*" Under your direction *American Routes* is widely recognized for both its research base and its production quality. Your broadcasts bring exciting new ideas to the vernacular humanities and to our understanding of how traditional and popular music relate to American cultural life. The National Public Radio program produced by your team in New Orleans offer a wide array of stories and music to a broad American audience.

Your current proposal effectively demonstrates how you have responded to NEH's commitment to public humanities programming. Like you, I am impressed with Chairman Adams's initiatives "The Common Good" and "Humanities in the Public Square." Your proposal to Public Programs for support of *American Routes* clearly addresses his idea of the "cultural commons", which is a diminishing realm in the increasingly news driven world of public radio.

I am especially grateful for your focus on public discourse. You address identity, culture, and community in ways that celebrate our diversity as Americans. By blending "roots" and "routes" through your mix of music and narrative, *American Routes* effectively weaves music into our national discourse.

I am pleased that distinguished colleagues like jazz scholar Michael White (Xavier University in New Orleans), folklorist John Szwed (emeritus at Columbia and Yale Universities), cultural and civil rights historian Glenda Gilmore (Yale), and Elizabeth Peterson (Director of the Library of Congress American Folklife Center) are included in your impressive team of national advisors.

As our society becomes increasingly diverse, the future of our nation and its sense of community will be defined by the cultural lives of everyday people. Your beautiful work with *American Routes* shows how we can transcend our divisions and shape our national identity in new and exciting ways.

*American Routes* presents important humanities issues through interviews and music in documentary features that both engage and entertain the listening public. These programs help us imagine a "more perfect union" and remind us that this work is far from finished. We should be proud of how our nation has achieved musical and cultural significance within its pluralistic, democratic framework. *American Routes* both reflects and celebrates public discourse in ways that bridge the *unum* and *pluribus* in our society.

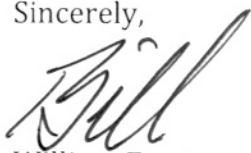
I am pleased that you feature blues in your musical and topical programming. Your focus on blues as a healing music that expresses pain as well as pleasure is an important message for the vernacular humanities. As you know, blues singers in my book *Give My Poor Heart Ease: Voices of the Mississippi Blues* address seeking a peaceful, happy and healthy life through their music. Your radio broadcasts allow us to hear the voices of these musicians as they speak about their worlds. You personally experienced these worlds during your work with African French and African American musicians in Louisiana. And the blues song "I Had My Fun If I Don't Get Well No More" with its rueful humor helped you survive cancer in a Baton Rouge hospice ward many years ago.

The blues vision helps calm what Little Walter called "A Crazy Mixed Up World." I will be honored to offer commentary about this discussion with musical examples that edify as they entertain.

Your list of proposed *American Routes* programs develops a wonderful range of musical approaches that advance our understanding of the nation through its stories and songs. Nick, you, your staff, and your advisors are uniquely qualified to engage these topics. I look forward to working with you with special pleasure on this project.

With all good wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill", written in a cursive, flowing style.

William Ferris

Joel R. Williamson Eminent Professor of History  
Adjunct Professor of Folklore  
Senior Associate Director

Yale University

Department of History  
P.O. Box 208324  
New Haven, Connecticut 06520-8324

Campus address:  
240 Hall of Graduate Studies  
320 York Street  
Telephone: 203 432-1366  
Fax: 203 432-7587

August 3, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to express my support for *American Routes* and to affirm my commitment to advise their program tentatively entitled "The Authentic Future: Promised Lands, Community Culture, and the Survival of American Vernacular Pluralism."

For nearly two decades, *American Routes* has brought a wide and enthusiastic audience along for the ride to learn about American music and culture. *American Routes* offers a pluralistic vision of America's diverse communities, but delights in revealing the cultural connections that cross bounds of race, class, gender, and region. "E pluribus unum" indeed!

I am especially pleased to be invited to consult on a two-hour program devoted to the role of the humanities in public life, the concept of a "usable past," and the balance between continuity and change in American culture and history. These issues have been at the center of my work as a teacher and scholar of American history for three decades, and they fascinate me still. I currently am engaged in writing a book about the artist Romare Bearden, who was born in North Carolina in 1911 and whose career brought him to Pittsburgh and Paris before he settled in Harlem in the 1950s. He spent most of his life as a cosmopolitan living in New York, but nonetheless, he painted from the perspective of an African American southerner. Writing about his career allows me to pursue my interest in the history, memory, and collective imagination of southerners like Bearden — black and white — who migrated to the North. They carried with them a geography of the mind. As twentieth century Americans like Bearden moved across the map, they balanced a deep sense of cultural identity with a belief in the possibility for radical change. How they maintained that balance offers an instructive case study for contemporary Americans who feel at once unmoored by a dizzying modernity, and desperate for meaningful change.

Broadly, then, I look forward to working with *American Routes* to theorize the concept of creating a "usable past" — the idea that we can imagine, re-imagine, and call on our histories in order to make sense of who we are now and who we might yet become. In other words, I look forward to assisting *American Routes* to reflect in song and story on the unending process of trying — in the words of their admirable proposal — to transform the past we inherit into the future we inhabit.

This is all to say that I am eager to work with *American Routes* to realize the substantial potential of the program they imagine here, and I encourage you to support their proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "G".

Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore

Peter V. and C. Vann Woodward Professor of History

Department of African American Studies

Department of American Studies



# Documentary Arts, Inc.

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Post Office Box 140244  
Dallas, Texas 75214

August 5, 2016

Documentary Arts strongly endorses the proposed series "*American Routes* -Expressing and Exploring the Vernacular in Story and Song." I have known Nick Spitzer for more than forty years, and have long-admired his efforts to bring innovative public humanities programming to local, regional and national audiences. His work with *American Routes* for more than 15 years is exemplary, and has provided an encyclopedic overview of the deep cultural fabric of our nation by focusing not only on the community origins of our music, musicians and cultures, but the multitude of directions and connections that have evolved among them over time.

The "*American Routes* -Expressing and Exploring the Vernacular in Story and Song" series interfaces extremely well with the work and mission of Documentary Arts, a non-profit organization I founded in 1985 to present new perspectives of historical issues and diverse cultures. Over the years, Documentary Arts' collaborations with major institutions-including the National Endowment for the Arts, African American Museum (Dallas), FARO (Brussels), Maison des Cultures du Monde (Paris), and UNESCO (Nairobi)-have highlighted little-known practitioners of cultural forms via photography, films and videos, audio recordings, oral histories, exhibitions, public programs, new technologies, and collections of material culture.

Currently, Documentary Arts is working with Encore Park Dallas to develop The Museum of Street Culture (MSC) to forge community between disparate worlds, bringing together all facets of urban life. Some of the permanent exhibitions will be located at 508 Park, offering a place where people can engage in dialogue they never thought they'd have. Its core permanent exhibitions, educational activities, and public programs will link the early film history of 508 Park with the Blues, Western Swing, and Mexican music recorded there.

MSC will heir expand the outreach of The Stewpot, located in Encore Park Dallas and now in its 40<sup>1</sup> years providing survival resources and opportunities for homeless and at risk people to start a new life. Together, MSC and The Stewpot will integrate and normalize - not displace - the existing homeless and at risk population. MSC is planning sound/video installations, interactive technologies, social media and other innovative modes of presentation that will broaden its outreach to people of all ages and backgrounds and involving underserved populations. In addition, MSC will focus on the homeless and the art they create, exploring current directions in street culture and their historical antecedents through public programs and a concert series in its newly completed 508 Amphitheater.

*Daniel P. Davison, Jr., Chairman*  
*Alan B. Govenar, President*  
*Bob Ray Sanders*  
*Ann Stephens Jackson*  
*David Dennard*

We are delighted to have the opportunity to present *American Routes* as part of our inaugural season in the Museum of Street Cultures' 508 Amphitheater. The "Streetscapes, Crossroads and Pit Stops" program planned as part of "*American Routes* — Expressing and Exploring the Vernacular in Story and Song" will provide a look at the significance of street and highway culture in American life as heralded and bemoaned from blues to hip-hop, country to rock. Specifically, MSC will present streets performers, including a New Orleans Jazz band, a Mexican American *conjunto*, and African American gospel preacher. The street is a gathering place — a physical and metaphorical way for us to travel with one another to unfamiliar territory and find common ground — a place of abundant life and creativity. By working with *American Routes*, we will illuminate the street, inviting disparate communities to meet, learn, and thrive together.

Our collaboration with *American Routes* can help advance the goals of the National Endowment for the Humanities by providing programming that advances public discourse about continuity and creativity in community-based traditional arts and related vernacular cultural expressions that are at once critical and celebratory, edifying and engaging.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alan Govenar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "G".

Alan Govenar, Ph.D.  
President



## Alan Govenar

Alan Govenar is a writer, folklorist, photographer, and filmmaker. He received a B.A. with distinction in American Folklore from Ohio State University in 1974, a M.A. in Folklore from the University of Texas at Austin in 1975, and a Ph.D. in Arts and Humanities from the University of Texas at Dallas in 1984. Govenar is a Guggenheim Fellow and the author of 27 books, including *Stoney Knows How: Life as a Tattoo Artist* (1981; rev. ed., 2003), *Deep Ellum and Central Track: Where the Black and White Worlds of Dallas Converged* (1998), coauthored with Jay F. Brakefield, *Stompin' at the Savoy: The Story of Norma Miller* (2006), *Extraordinary Ordinary People: Five American Masters of Traditional Arts* (2006), *Untold Glory: African Americans in Pursuit of Freedom, Opportunity and Achievement* (2007), *Texas Blues: The Rise of Contemporary Sound* (2008), and *Lightnin' Hopkins: His Life and Blues* (2010). His book *Osceola: Memories of a Sharecropper's Daughter* (2000) won First Place in the New York Book Festival (Children's Non-Fiction), a *Boston Globe*–Hornbook Honor, and an Orbis Pictus Honor from the National Council of Teachers of English. In addition to writing nonfiction Govenar has also made fourteen artist books with his prose, poetry, and photographs that are in major museum collections, including the Museum of Modern Art (New York), Victoria and Albert Museum (London), Meermanno Museum (The Hague), Museum of Fine Arts (Boston), and Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris). Govenar's article "Blind Lemon Jefferson: The Myth and the Man," published in *Black Music Journal* (Spring 2000), gave rise to his and Akin Babatunde's musical *Blind Lemon Blues* (2004), which had its world premiere at the Festival L'Imaginaire in Paris and the Forum Meyrin in Geneva, prior to a full-production off-Broadway (2009) in New York City. Govenar's musical play *Texas in Paris* was presented in its off-Broadway premiere at the York Theatre (2015).

In 1985 Govenar founded Documentary Arts, Inc., a non-profit organization to broaden public knowledge and appreciation of the arts of different cultures in all media. Documentary Arts seeks to fulfill its mission through the development of innovative exhibitions, publications, photographs, films, videos, radio series on traditional music and folk arts, folk artist in school programs, and interactive media and websites, utilizing new technologies as a means to engage scholars and the general public. One of Documentary Arts' richest resources is its Texas African American Photography (TAAP) archive, cofounded in 1995 by Govenar and artist Kaleta Doolin. Over the years, the TAAP archive has grown to include over 50,000 prints and negatives dating from the late 1840s to the present day. Govenar has mined this photography archive in curating a number of groundbreaking exhibitions, including *The Early Years of Rhythm and Blues: The Photography of Benny Joseph* (1986), which toured to thirty venues around the country and was accompanied by Govenar's book of the same name (1991; rev. ed., 2004); *Portraits of Community: African American Photography in Texas* (1994) with a book by Govenar of the same name (1996); *Facing the Rising Sun: Freedman's Cemetery*, on view at the African American Museum in Dallas from 2001 to 2011, accompanied by a catalog coedited by Govenar and Phillip Collins; and *Jasper Texas: The Community Photographs of Alonzo Jordan*, which opened at the International Center of Photography in New York City in 2011 and was accompanied by a book by Govenar published by Steidl.



For more than three decades, Govenar and Documentary Arts have developed and implemented a multifaceted project to make the scope of the National Heritage Fellowship program accessible to the broadest possible public. In the 1980s, Documentary Arts produced "Masters of Traditional Music," a 52-part radio series on the recipients of the National Heritage Fellowship, which was broadcast in 1992 on 150 public radio stations across the country and received a Golden Reel Award as the Best National Music series from the National Federation of Community Broadcasters. In 2001, Govenar produced a second 52-part radio series in association with WGBH, Boston, and published a 2-volume biographical dictionary, an education guide, and a DVD-Rom by the same title. In 2004, Documentary Arts introduced its "Masters of Traditional Arts" interactive video kiosks, which are now in use at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress and have traveled to cultural institutions around the country, including the Augusta Heritage Center, Texas Folklife, and the Museum of International Folk Art. In 2011 Documentary Arts produced an updated DVD-Rom, celebrating the first 30 years of the National Heritage Fellowship program that was distributed in with a special publication of the National Endowment for the Arts. In 2015, Govenar and the staff of Documentary Arts are completing work on new touchscreen kiosks and an interactive website, integrating all content from its "Masters of Traditional Arts" DVD-Rom with an education guide and an expanded encyclopedic focus.

Govenar has also directed or codirected more than two-dozen films, some of which, like *Stoney Knows How* (1981), are outgrowths of his books. Others are studies unto themselves, such as *Texas Style* (1984) on traditional fiddle music, which won a CINE Golden Eagle; *Voyage of Doom* (1998) on the French explorer La Salle, which was broadcast internationally as a coproduction with NOVA and ARTE; *The Devil's Swing* (2005) on the music and culture of the Texas-Mexico border; *The Poetry of Exactitude (La Poésie de l'exactitude)* (2009) on Lucien Mouchet's detailed and precise operable reproductions of carousels and fairground scenes, rendered to 1/120 scale of the originals; *Master Qi and the Monkey King* (2011), which features the life and career of Qi Shu Fang, who toured the world as a Chinese opera star before starting her new life in the United States; *The Beat Hotel* (2012) which explores the legacy of the American Beats in Paris during the heady years between 1957 and 1963 when Allen Ginsberg, Peter Orlovsky and Gregory Corso fled the obscenity trials in the United States surrounding the publication of Ginsberg's poem *Howl*; *You Don't Need Feet to Dance* (2013), which follows African immigrant Sidiki Conde, having lost the use of his legs to polio at fourteen, as he balances his career as a performing artist with the almost insurmountable obstacles of life in New York City, from his fifth-floor walk up apartment in the East village, down the stairs with his hands and navigating in his wheelchair through Manhattan onto buses and into the subway; and *Serving Second Chances* (2015), which chronicles efforts to provide survival resources and opportunities for homeless and at risk people to start a new life.





GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Georgetown College

*Department of Performing Arts*

Re: Letter of Support for American Routes NEH Proposal: Angola Bound Revisited

August 7, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to support the American Routes proposal to create an in-depth program on music at Louisiana State Penitentiary and other institutions. This summer, I worked with Nick Spitzer on a symposium on music and incarceration held at Angola. The rich dialogue and performances there provide a good base for expansion of critical issues including prison reform, race, and the value of the arts. This project can carry the momentum of a scholarly, correctional, and public dialogue about music in prisons—a subject that has received little attention since the collection of African-American worksongs in the 1930s to 1960s. The musical voices of today's prisoners help update the subject to a situation of mass incarceration, economic disenfranchisement, and racial disparity.

I have devoted most of my work as an ethnomusicologist to addressing issues at the intersection of music and incarceration and am glad to have the opportunity to direct my scholarly efforts towards the public forum that American Routes maintains. Issues of mass incarceration and the public value of the arts deserve the kind of thoughtful investigation that American Routes provides. I look forward to participating by doing interviews as well as by sharing my scholarly and community work with the producers.

Sincerely,

Benjamin J. Harbert, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Music  
Georgetown University  
108 Davis Performing Arts Center  
37th & O Streets, NW  
Washington DC 20057-1063  
(202) 687-2438  
bjh58@georgetown.edu



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Georgetown College

Department of Performing Arts

## Benjamin J. Harbert

Georgetown University, 108 Davis Center, 37th & O Streets, NW, Washington DC 20057

(202) 687-2438 | bjh58@georgetown.edu | curriculum vitae as of August 2016

### PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

- 2010-present Assistant Professor, Georgetown University, Washington DC.  
“American Music Ethnography,” “Guitar Theory and Composition,”  
“History of Rock,” “Introduction to Ethnomusicology,” “Jazz History,”  
“The Music Documentary,” “Music as Labor,” “Music in USA Prisons.”
- Spring 2010 Lecturer, Pomona College, Claremont, CA.  
“Ethnomusicology in Theory, Method and Practice.”
- Spring 2010 Teaching Fellow, UCLA.  
“Prison Songs: Music and America’s Carceral System.”

### EDUCATION

- 2010 Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles, Ethnomusicology  
Dissertation: “Doing Time: The Work of Music in Louisiana Prisons.”  
Advisor: Anthony Seeger
- 2007 M.A., University of California, Los Angeles, Ethnomusicology  
MA Paper: “Prometheus Sings: The Mythology of Prison Music.”  
Advisor: Anthony Seeger
- 1997 B.A., Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, Anthropology and Music, dual honors

### SELECTED PUBLICATIONS: PRINT AND FILM

- under review *Don’t Tell Me How To Listen: American Music Documentary as Cinematic Music Scholarship*. Music/Interview. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- 2013 “Noise and Its Formless Shadows: Egypt’s Extreme Metal as Avant-Garde *Nafas Dowsba*.” In *The Arab Avant Garde: Music, Politics, Modernity*. Edited by Thomas Burkhalter, Kay Dickinson and Benjamin J. Harbert. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press. 229-272.
- 2013 “Editor’s Introduction.” In “Women’s Prison Music,” edited by Benjamin J. Harbert. Special issue, *American Music* 30 (2). 127-133.
- 2013 “Only Time: Musical Means to the Personal, the Private and the Polis at the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women,” in “Women’s Prison Music,” special issue, *American Music* 30 (2). 203-240.
- 2012 *Follow Me Down: Portraits of Louisiana Prison Musicians* (producer and director). Chicago International Music and Movies Film Festival (2013), Southern Screen Film Festival (2013), Reel Music Film Festival (2012). Distributed by Films for the Humanities & Sciences (2013). 96 min.  
*selected review*: Lara, Francisco. 2016. *Ethnomusicology* 60 (2). 378-381.

- 2010 "I'll Keep on Living After I Die: Musical Manipulation and Transcendence at Louisiana State Penitentiary," *The International Journal of Community Music* 3 (1): 65-76.
- 2008 "Of Their Knowledge in Musick: Early European Musical Encounters in Egypt and the Levant as Read within the Emerging British Public Sphere, 1687-1811." *Pacific Review of Ethnomusicology* 13: 1-15.
- 2008 *John Filcich: Life in the Circle Dance* (editor and co-producer with Ankica Petrovic). South East European Film Festival, Los Angeles (2008). Distributed by Media-Generation (2008). 29 min.

#### RECENT CONFERENCE PAPERS

- 2016 "Playing the Changes: New Penology and Angola's Jazz Scene in the 1950s." Angola Bound Revisited Symposium, Louisiana State Penitentiary.
- 2016 "Angola Bound: Rethinking Prison Music as Neoliberal Labor." Georgetown University.
- 2015 "Watching to Listen: Music, Sound, and the Image in Early Music Documentary." Auditory Knowledge in the Arts, Georgetown University.
- 2014 "The Fortunes of Failure: Neoliberal Transformations of Musical Labor at Angola Prison." Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting, Pittsburgh.
- 2013 "Don't Tell Me How to Listen: The Music of North American Observational Cinema." Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting, Indianapolis.
- 2013 "The Global Sound of Social Change: Music, Empowerment and Community Building." Future of Music Summit, Washington DC.
- 2013 "Art and Advocacy." Panel. Future of Music Summit, Washington DC.
- 2012 "Politics and Privacy of Talent: Music at the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women." Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting, New Orleans.
- 2011 "Sounds from Inside: Inmate Histories of Music at Louisiana State Penitentiary, 1964-present." International Association for the Study of Popular Music (U.S. Branch) Annual Conference, Cincinnati, OH.
- 2010 "Blood in My Eyes: The Inspiring Principles of Musicians at Louisiana's Hunt Prison." Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA.

#### SELECTED RESEARCH AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2014-2015 Initiative on Technology-Enhanced Learning (ITEL) Grant, "Interactively Visualizing Music: Animating Pedagogy through Custom Multimedia Software." Georgetown University
- 2009 Archiving and Preservation Grant, "California Prison Music Archiving Project," GRAMMY Foundation
- 2009 Non-Print Publication Subvention, "Follow Me Down: The New Work of Louisiana Prison Songs," Society for American Music
- 1997-1998 Thomas J. Watson Fellowship, "Cross-Cultural Pathways through Musical Expressions: Egypt, India, Spain"

#### PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Society for Ethnomusicology (president of Mid-Atlantic Chapter 2015-2017)  
 Society for American Music  
 International Association for the Study of Popular Music

July 28, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to express my admiration for *American Routes* and my strong support for their proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities, “Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story & Song.” At a time when many bemoan a crisis in the humanities, *American Routes* offers a clarion – and often funky – call to arms, heralding how essential are music, aesthetics, history, culture, and community to all of us committed to a humane future.

I am eager to serve as a national advisor and contributing producer for the 2017-2018 *American Routes* season as a whole, and as a humanities advisor for several programs in particular, including “The Authentic Future: Promised Lands, Community Culture, and the Survival of American Vernacular Pluralism,” “Streetscapes, Crossroads, and Pit Stops,” and “‘This Land Is Your Land’: American Environmental History in Song.”

The proposed “Streetscapes” program explores the significance of the street in American culture. Highways are both means of connection and measures of distance – they loom large as metaphors in our nation of immigrants. I look forward to bringing my expertise in urban history to help *American Routes* understand how roads are also physical artifacts – infrastructural manifestations of specific historical political economies, from the Progressive-era focus on rational, paved street grids to the post-World War II urban renewal practice of using highways to displace neighborhoods that Modernist planners considered slums.

The “Authentic Future” program engages the central question artists – and all citizens – face: how is change possible? Taking as a point of departure America’s tradition of utopian thinking about promised lands, the program demonstrates how visions of the future are created out of imaginations of the past. *American Routes* rightly describes this interplay between past, present, and future as “tradition,” though my own orientation leads me to want to call it “history.” Either way, exploring how we can construct and draw on a usable past in the service of what Nick Spitzer has termed an “authentic future” defines my mission as a scholar and teacher. Indeed, it strikes me as an inspiring way to understand the fundamental purpose of the humanities.

Finally, I wish to dwell at greater length on “This Land Is Your Land” – the first *American Routes* program devoted to the environment – because it offers a model of the show’s distinctive ability to make nuanced, cutting-edge, and demonstrably useful scholarship accessible to a vast audience. With this carefully-crafted focus on how diverse American communities have shaped and been shaped by the world around them – in other words, by reflecting on the iterative connections between nature and culture – *American Routes* will help its hundreds of thousands of listeners to make sense of the challenges posed by climate change.

Let me offer an example drawn from my one of my particular areas of interest, which is the history of disaster. When the Department of Housing and Urban Development recently awarded

funds to native communities in Alaska and Louisiana to relocate in the face of rising seas, the recipients were widely described as America's first climate refugees – suggesting an unprecedented predicament. But *American Routes'* focus on Dust Bowl migrants who in the 1930s sang of moving “where the weather suits my clothes” offers historical precedent and, to paraphrase the historian David Blight, the opportunity to look way back in time and see ourselves anew. We may be facing these dilemmas for the first time ourselves, but they are not new. In the responses to the Dust Bowl – the local vernacular cultural responses, as well as the national economic and political responses – we can perceive the possibility for progress. Offering a rich and accessible account of our history of migration, adaptation, and innovation in the face of environmental change, *American Routes* can help us to chart a way forward today.

More broadly, by foregrounding the cultural causes and consequences of the Dust Bowl and other droughts, floods, and pollution, *American Routes* is uniquely positioned to help us to see that what we call environmental problems are always human problems. In this way, *American Routes* engages with the idea – currently reshaping thinking across the academic disciplines – that we live in the age of the anthropocene: a geological era in which human action is now a primary factor affecting the earth's climate. In my work, the idea of the anthropocene suggests that humans have so altered the world around them that there can be no such thing as a natural disaster according to the usual sense of that phrase, because natural forces have become indistinguishable from human forces. In other words, the anthropocene idea dissolves the boundary between the natural and the manmade. Scientists are learning what humanists have long known: we live in the world we have made for ourselves.

This is one reason that *American Routes* – and this environmental history program in particular – is so important. Debates over environmental issues must not be left to the meteorologists or reduced to amoral cost-benefit analyses. Or, put another way, when New Orleans pianist Dr. John sings that we ought to “clean all the waters in this world,” his prayer would not be answered by some more effective filtration system. These questions demand the attention of artists and scholars who can help build our responses on a foundation of humane values.

Nick Spitzer and *American Routes* have been making this case admirably to a large and devoted audience every week for nearly two decades. That is all why I am proud to associate myself with their work, and why I urge you to support their proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy H", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Andy Horowitz  
Assistant Professor

**Andrew Deutsch Horowitz**

(b) (6)

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**Current Position**

Assistant Professor of History, Tulane University (July 2014 – present)

**Education**

Ph.D., History, Yale University (2014)

Dissertation: “The End of Empire, Louisiana: Disaster and Recovery on the Gulf Coast, 1915-2012.”

Committee: Glenda Gilmore (chair), John Mack Faragher, Kai Erikson

Approved with distinction. Awarded the Southern Historical Association’s Woodward Prize for best dissertation in Southern history; awarded Yale’s Eggleston Prize for best dissertation in American history; nominated for the Society of American History’s Nevins Prize for best dissertation in American history.

B.A., History, Yale College (2003)

*Magna Cum Laude*, with distinction in History

**Current Book Project**

“How To Sink New Orleans: Katrina’s History, America’s Tragedy, 1915-2015,” under contract with Harvard University Press (anticipated submission in 2017).

**Peer-Reviewed Articles**

“The Complete Story of the Galveston Horror: Trauma, History, and the Great Storm of 1900,” *Historical Reflections/Reflexions Historiques* Vol. 41, No. 3 (Winter 2015): 95-108.

“Hurricane Betsy and the Politics of Disaster in New Orleans’ Lower Ninth Ward, 1965-1967,” *Journal of Southern History* Vol. 80, No. 4 (November 2014): 893-934.

“The BP Oil Spill and the End of Empire, Louisiana,” *Southern Cultures* Vol. 20, No. 3 (Fall 2014): 6-23.

Essays and editorials published in the *New York Times*, *Slate*, *The Huffington Post*, and *The Atlantic*.

**Selected Conference Papers**

“Oh the Humanities! Culture and Values in Coastal Restoration,” *State of the Coast Annual Conference*, New Orleans, LA, June 2016.

“Flood Control, Oil Rights, and America’s Sinking Gulf Coast,” *Disaster, Environment and Property: Historical Approaches, 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries*, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France, December 2015.

“Listening as Resistance or Resistant to Listening?: Ethnography, Oral History, Grounded Theory in American Studies,” roundtable, *American Studies Association Annual Meeting*, Toronto, Canada, October 2015.

**Selected Conference Papers (continued)**

“How to Sink New Orleans: Flood Control and Oil Development in South Louisiana, 1927-2005,” *Urban History Association Biennial Conference*, Philadelphia, PA, October 2014.

“Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans: Hurricane Katrina’s History,” *Disasters Wet and Dry*, Renmin University, Beijing, China, May 2013.

“HELP! Hurricane Betsy in New Orleans, 1965,” *Southern Historical Association Annual Meeting*, Mobile, AL, November 2012.

**Courses Taught**

Twentieth Century America; United States Environmental History; The Katrina Disaster Now; Disasters in America; Wilderness in the North American Imagination; Oral History / New Haven History; The Future of the American City.

**Selected Public Humanities Experience**

*Founding Director, New Haven Oral History Project at Yale*, New Haven, CT (2003-2007)

Founded community-based research program to document the oral history of New Haven, CT. Topics included ethnic and racial politics and identity, urban renewal, Holocaust memory, labor history, and regional foodways. Trained and supervised students, wrote grants, fundraised, administered budget, worked with faculty and administrators. Produced museum exhibits, community workshops, and lectures. Developed a permanent archive of over 250 interviews.

*Director, Imagining New Orleans*, New Orleans, LA (2006)

Initiated and coordinated a collaborative effort between the Louisiana State Museum, the Southern Oral History Program, and the Beinecke Library at Yale University to document New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Supervised a staff of 5 to conduct 60 oral history interviews, produce nearly 1000 photographs, and archive over 1000 pages of other materials.

City of New Haven Cultural Affairs Commission, Mayoral Appointee (2011-2014)

Yale University and National Museum of African American History and Culture Public History Institute Summer Seminar (2012)





**College of Humanities & Social Sciences**  
*Department of Geography & Anthropology*

Public Programs-Media Panel  
National Endowment for Humanities  
Washington, DC 20506

Dear Panel Members:

I am committed to advising and being interviewed for a program hour on the definitive gospel voice of New Orleans' Mahalia Jackson for *American Routes*. As a native Louisianian and ethnomusicologist focused on African American sacred music and related rituals, I have researched and presented work on Jackson's significance in a variety of settings. These settings include two biographical essays and most recently presentations at Xavier and Tulane Universities commemorating her 100<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary and beyond, interrogating her performance style and the impact New Orleans' music had on her musical development and her moniker as the "greatest gospel singer who has ever lived."

In addition, I will advise *American Routes* and Nick Spritzer more broadly with regard to African American musicians, styles and selections for radio documentary production, including issues surrounding: the social impact of the blues, classic blues singer Bessie Smith, the revival of African American traditional string band music by the Chocolate Drops and the emergence of Trombone Shorty as a major player conjoining New Orleans traditional jazz, R & B, funk and hip-hop.

I have known Nick Spitzer for many years. He first came to the state to conduct research on the Afro French Creole communities of south Louisiana. I met him in the early 1980s after he became our State Folklorist where he pushed to make sure folk artists were brought into the main stream of the Louisiana Division of the Arts. So I have worked with him on various occasions including the Florida Parish Folklife Project, the Baton Rouge Blues Festival, Louisiana Folklife Festival, Smithsonian Folklife Festival, and the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. I have seen him and his work develop over the years and I must say, his knowledge of American music, varied experiences in cultural research and ethnography and a gift for getting people to talk, are some of his valued assets and informs his most impressive work by far--*American Routes*.

Sincerely,



Joyce Marie Jackson, Ph.D.

Director, African & African American Studies  
Professor, Dept. of Geography & Anthropology



**JOYCE MARIE JACKSON, Ph.D.**  
**Louisiana State University**  
**Abridged Curriculum Vita**

***ACADEMIC BACKGROUND***

Ph.D. in Folklore–Ethnomusicology

Indiana University, Blgtn.

Minors: African American Studies

& Instructional Systems Technology

M.M. in Vocal Performance & Pedagogy

Louisiana State University

B.M. in Vocal Performance

Louisiana State University

***PRESENT POSITION***

Director, African & African American Studies, 2010- Present

Professor of Folklore and Ethnomusicology in the Department of Geography & Anthropology

Affiliate Professor in Women's and Gender Studies and International Studies, LSU  
Baton Rouge

***PUBLICATIONS (Selected)***

*Life in the Village: A Cultural Memory of the Fazendeville Community*. Washington D.C. and New Orleans: U. S. Dept. of the Interior, National Historical Park, 2003.

Quartets: Jubilee to Gospel, in *African American Music in Cultural Perspective*. Ed. by Portia Maulsby and Mellonee Burnim. New York: Routledge Press, 2015.

Rockin' for a Risen Savior: Bakongo and Christian Iconicity in the Louisiana Easter Rock Ritual, in *Esotericism in African American Religious Experience*. Ed. by Stephen C. Finley, Margarita Simon Guillory and Hugh R. Page, Jr., p. 295-313. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015.

Louisiana Cultures: A Creole Mosaic, in *Louisiana: The Pelican State*. Ed. by Wayne Parent and Ryan Ortega, p. 36-71. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2014.

Songs of Spirit and Continuity of Consciousness: African American Gospel Music in Louisiana," *Louisiana Folklore Miscellany* 24 (2014): 62-9.

African American Sacred and Secular Identities in Mississippi's Piney Woods, in *Ethnic Heritage in Mississippi: The Twentieth Century*. Ed. by Shana Walton, p.74-97. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2012.

Beyond Urban Borders: Unveiling New Discourses on the Rural Jazz Narrative in the River Road Region, *Louisiana Folklore Miscellany* 21 (2011): 75-89.

African American Folklife in South Florida, in the *Florida Folklife Reader*. Ed. by Tina Bucuvalas, p. 10-22. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011.

The Gospel Caravan, in *Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing: How the Apollo Theater Shaped American Entertainment*. Ed. by Richard Carlin and Kinshasha Holman Conwill. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Books, 2010.

Easter Rock; Mardi Gras Indians; and Quartets, African American (3 essays) in *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (Folklore Volume). Ed. by Glenn Hinson and William Ferris. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

Declaration of Taking Twice: The Fazendeville Community of the Lower Ninth Ward, *American Anthropologist* 108, No. 4 (December 2006):766-780.

Rockin' and Rushin' for Christ: Hidden Transcripts in Diasporic Ritual Performance, in *Caribbean and Southern: Transnational Perspectives on the U.S. South*. Anthropological Proceedings Vol. 38, ed. by Helen Regis. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006.

Cultural Continuity: Masking Traditions of the Black Mardi Gras Indians and the Yoruba Egungun, in *Orisa: Yoruba Gods and Spiritual Identity*. Ed. by Toyin Falola. African World Press, 2005.

Bahamian Rushing; Campbell, Lucie; Easter Rock; Gospel Music; Gospel Quartet Music; and Mardi Gras Indians, (6 essays) in *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of African American Folklore*. Ed. by Anand Prahlad. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2005.

Like a River Flowing with Living Water: Worshiping in the Mississippi Delta, *Smithsonian Institution's 1997 Festival of American Folklife*, pp. 31-35. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997.

The Cultural Evolution of the African American Sacred Quartet, *Saints and Sinners: Religion, Blues and (D)evil in African-American Music and Literature*, pp. 97-112. Ed. by Robert Sacre. Liege, Belgium: Societe Liegeoise de Musicologie, 1996.

*The Gospel Train: Zion Travelers Spiritual Singers from Baton Rouge, LA*. (Project Director and Co-Producer). Louisiana Folklife Recording Series #009. A documentary recording (cassette) and interpretive booklet, issued in 1996.

The Changing Nature of Gospel Music: A Southern Case Study, *African American Review* 29, No. 2, (Summer 1995): 185-200.

Singing His Praises in the Crescent City: African American Gospel Music in New Orleans, *Louisiana Folklife* 27 (1994).

Mahalia Jackson (biographical essay) in *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*, pp.620-623. Ed. by Darlene Clark Hine. New York: Carlton Publishing Co., 1993.

Music of the Black Churches, in *Folklife of the Florida Parishes*. Ed. by Joel Garner. Baton Rouge: Louisiana Folklife Program, 1989.

**ARTISTIC OR CREATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS (PERFORMANCES, EXHIBITIONS & MEDIA PRESENTATIONS-Selected)**

*Rockin' for A Risen Savior: The Louisiana Easter Rock Ritual* and *Easter Rock* two documentary films (50 and 15 minutes) produced by Joyce Marie Jackson, based on years of ethnographic and historical research focusing on a Baptist ritual coordinated by African American women in northern Louisiana, 2015.

Co-Curated (with J. Nash Porter) the Smithsonian exhibition, *The New Orleans Black Mardi Gras Indians: Exploring a Community Tradition from an Insider's View*. This exhibition was on view for six months (April-October 2006) and educational programs accompanied the event. I wrote the narratives, which were based on my ethnographic and historical research. We also gave gallery talks and trained docents.

Songs of the Spirit: African American Sacred Music, performed in solo concert (one hour) at the 2000 Summer Cultural Arts Series in Lafayette – Sponsored by the Acadiana Arts Council, et.al.

**AWARDS, HONORS, FELLOWSHIPS**

2015 LSU Brigh Mohan Distinguished Professor Award for Work in Social Justice

2014 LSU Most Outstanding Faculty Award for Service Learning

1993 Rockefeller Foundation Post-Doctoral Fellow, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

1986 National Endowment for the Arts Management Fellow-Folk Arts Program

1982 Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellow (Bambara), Indiana University

**GRANTS AWARDED (Selected)**

Board of Regents Awards to Louisiana Artists and Scholars (ATLAS)

National Endowment for the Arts, Heritage and Preservation (2)

National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (Produces the Grammy Awards)

National Historical Park/Gulf South Cooperative Ecosystem Study Unit (2)

Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (6)

Louisiana Division of the Arts, Folklife Program (3)

**NOTABLE ACTIVITIES**

2014-Present Director of LSU in Haiti Academic Programs Abroad

2010-2011 President of Louisiana Folklore Society

2002-2006 Director of LSU in Sénégal Academic Programs Abroad

2003-2008 Chair and Governor's appointee to the Louisiana Folklife Commission

**RESEARCH AREAS**

African American Expressive Culture and Music

African Diaspora Rituals and Performance Centered Studies and Theory

Cultural Sustainability Pre and Post Disasters: Louisiana & Haiti

Louisiana and the Afro-French Cultural Connections

Cultural Program Development

**FIELD RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

Personal Field Research – Conducted Ethnographic Research in the American South (Louisiana, Georgia & Florida); Port-au-Spain, Trinidad, Jacmel, Haiti; Andros Island and Nassau Bahamas; Sénégal and Ghana, West Africa.

Contract Field Researcher – U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Historical Park

Contract Field Researcher – Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Contract Field Researcher – Georgia State Folklife Program, Atlanta

Contract Field Researcher – Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Miami  
Contract Field Researcher – Jazz & Heritage Foundation, New Orleans  
Contract Field Researcher – Louisiana Folklife Program, Florida Parishes



# Smithsonian Institution

**Dr. Richard Kurin**

**Acting Provost/Under Secretary for Museums & Research**

August 8, 2016

Division of Public Programs  
National Endowment for the Humanities  
Washington, DC 20506

Dear NEH Public Programs Colleagues:

I write to express my full support to public radio's *American Routes*—a masterful and enduring series that presents and interprets the vernacular arts and humanities from an Americanist perspective, and to confirm that I will provide commentary on one of its proposed programs: "The Authentic Future: Promised Lands, Community Culture, and the Survival of American Vernacular Pluralism."

Widely heard around the nation, *American Routes* documents community-based music and musicians in relation to their identifying cultural sources and symbols. I have known its creator and leading force Dr. Nick Spitzer for some three decades since our days working together in the Smithsonian's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. He continues to work on Smithsonian projects, ranging from the presentation of Chinese cultural traditions at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival two years ago, to ongoing projects on cultural heritage policy, and work on a 2017 program on NEA's National Heritage Fellowship program.

"The Authentic Future" program will present voices from current and earlier programs—including vernacular artists and humanists past and present—regarding their visions of an idealized future. The approach is a fine way to build a thoughtful, informed public discourse about how diverse people, with interesting perspectives can utilize cultural specific and often intertwined experiences to envision future ways of being, living, and expressing their humanity. Rather than either devalue or romanticize tradition, or treat authenticity as some objective value or relativistic, post-modern construct, the program aims toward dialogue and cultural conversation. How do varied folks—and by that the program means balladeers and professors, cultural exemplars and commentators alike, understand and utilize the past, and project values and cultural practices they may hold dear, ambivalently, and with some trepidation to construe future ways of social being? The varied voices featured in the program, amplified by music, spoken word and verbal artistry are sure to make the program attractive, engaging, and hopefully inspiring to listeners.

I have full confidence that Spitzer and his crew will do a fine job in producing the program and I look forward to participating in it on behalf of the Smithsonian.

Sincerely,

Smithsonian Castle on the National Mall  
1000 Jefferson Drive, SW, Art Room 219  
MRC 040 PO Box 37012  
Washington DC 20013-7012  
(202) 633-5240 Telephone  
(202) 357-7031 Fax  
kurin@si.edu Email



**Richard Kurin**  
**Acting Provost/Under Secretary for Museums & Research,**  
**Smithsonian Institution**

Dr. Richard Kurin is a key senior leader at the Smithsonian responsible for the oversight of all of its national museums including, among others, American History, Natural History, Air and Space, American Indian, American Art, the National Portrait Gallery, the Hirshhorn, the Freer and Sackler Galleries, African Art, the Cooper Hewitt and the new African American museum and the National Zoo which collectively hold some 139 million specimens, artifacts and artworks and host about 30 million visitors a year. He also oversees all of the Smithsonian's scholarly and scientific research institutes, including its Astrophysical Observatory, Tropical Research Institute, and Environmental Research Center, with projects in 145 nations around the globe, as well cultural and educational programs like the Latino Center and the Asian Pacific American Center.

Trained as a cultural anthropologist specializing in South Asia, Kurin is a former Fulbright fellow who earned his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and taught at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. For two decades he directed the Smithsonian's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, which produces the Smithsonian Folklife Festival—an annual living cultural exposition on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Folkways Recordings and other major national celebration events and productions that have won Academy, Emmy and Grammy awards.

Kurin served on the U.S. Commission for UNESCO and helped draft the 2003 international treaty on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage now ratified by more than 160 nations. Following Haiti's devastating 2010 earthquake, he organized the international Cultural Recovery Project which saved some 35,000 artworks, artifacts and archival documents, trained more than 100 Haitians and resulted in a permanent conservation center in Port-au-Prince. This effort stimulated other Smithsonian projects and collaborations for saving endangered heritage in Mali, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Nepal and even New York City.

Kurin's scholarship and museological work have been recognized by the International Council of Museums, Harvard's Peabody Museum, the American Anthropological Association, and the American Folklore Society. Awarded the Smithsonian Secretary's Gold Medal for Exceptional Service, he serves as the Smithsonian's liaison to the U.S. President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, the White House Historical Association and numerous other boards. He is an elected fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is the author of scores of scholarly articles and seven books, among them the best-selling *The Smithsonian's History of America in 101 Objects*, also the basis for a Smithsonian Channel television series, a Telly-winning lecture series for The Great Courses and an edX Massive Open Online Course.



Center for Traditional  
Music and Dance

August 4, 2016

National Endowment for the Humanities  
400 Seventh Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20506

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to write in support of the proposed American Routes program *The Sound of Pluralism: Music as Cultural Identity in New York City Neighborhoods*. The Center for Traditional Music and Dance is honored to participate as a content partner and looks forward to working with Dr. Nick Spitzer and the American Routes staff on producing the program.

New York City is a city of neighborhoods, where people from all over the planet live next door to each other, sharing cultures, music and stories. The proposed American Routes program gets to the heart of what neighborhood cultural life in the city is all about. How is music used as a marker of identity in everyday life? How is the music from the homeland changed by exposure to other cultures? Is it still Colombian or Haitian or Armenian music when it's made in New York? These are similar questions to ones we explore at the Center for Traditional Music and Dance, which has spent nearly 50 years working with immigrant communities in New York City to present and preserve their cultural traditions. What does it mean to be a traditional artist who is also a New Yorker and an immigrant and an American? The American Routes program delves deep into these issues.

American Routes produces the highest quality humanities-driven broadcast programming focused on the cultural expression of everyday life in the United States. Their approach to humanities topics, and especially those grassroots community based cultural conversations, is unmatched. As a former producer with the program, I am well aware of the attention to detail, the engaging writing and creative presentation that American Routes achieves in every production. Reaching the public on matters that are familiar to them is easy. Engaging and retaining those listeners on topics that are foreign is the more difficult task, and one that American Routes does with ease each and every time.

I look forward to working, now as a content advisor, with American Routes and fully support their series of programming for this NEH proposal.

Sincerely,

Maureen Loughran, Ph.D.

Deputy Director

Center for Traditional Music and Dance

mloughran@ctmd.org



# Maureen E. Loughran

Phone (b) (6) Email: [mloughran@ctmd.org](mailto:mloughran@ctmd.org)

## EDUCATION

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**Brown University**, Providence, RI

Ph.D., Ethnomusicology, 2008

MA, Ethnomusicology, 2002

**Catholic University of America**, Washington, DC

MA, Irish Studies, 1999

**University College, National University of Ireland**, Dublin, Ireland

Higher Diploma in Irish Folklore, 1996

**Saint Mary's College**, Notre Dame, IN

BMus., Music Theory and Literature, *cum laude*, 1995

## EXPERIENCE

---

**Center for Traditional Music and Dance**, New York, NY

- Deputy Director, May 2016-present

**Folklife Program, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, State of Louisiana,  
Baton Rouge, LA, October 2015-May 2016**

- Contract Fieldworker, Baton Rouge Sacred and Secular Musical Traditions

**Visiting Adjunct Professor, Bard Early College Program, New Orleans, LA, Fall 2013**

- Music in World Cultures

**American Routes, Public Radio Exchange (PRX), New Orleans, LA**

- Senior Contributing Producer, September 2013-September 2014
- Senior Producer, June 2010-September 2013
- Co-Producer, July 2009- June 2010
- Associate Producer, July 2008 - July 2009
- Audio Archivist, September 2007-July 2008

**Adjunct Music Faculty, Trinity College, Washington, DC, Fall 2004- Fall 2006**

- Music in World Cultures (Fall 2005, Fall 2006)
- Applied Piano (Fall 2004-Spring 2006)

## PUBLICATIONS

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### Print

Journal Article, "But What if They Call the Police?: Applied Ethnomusicology and Urban Activism in the United States," for *Muzikološki zbornik/Musicological Annual 2007*, Ljubljana, Slovenia, Fall 2008.

Radio Documentary Review Essay, "Any Mummies Allowed? (CBC 2005); From Sagebrush to Steppe (NPR 2005); The Radio Ballads: Thirty Years of Conflict (BBC 2006)" for the *Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 122, Spring 2009, no. 484: 212.

Multimedia Article, "Sacred Sounds of Baton Rouge" in *Baton Rouge Traditions*, Louisiana Folklife Program, Louisiana Division of the Arts, Office of Cultural Development, Dept. of



## Culture, Recreation and Tourism:

[www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles\\_Essays/brsacred1.html](http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/brsacred1.html)

## Radio

*American Routes* programs: produced over 80 2-hour programs and numerous segments from 2007-present, broadcast nationally on public radio and available streaming at [www.americanroutes.org](http://www.americanroutes.org)

## PRESENTATIONS

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"Radio as an Ethnographic Tool" invited talk, symposium on radio archives, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, April 2014

"Socio-Spatial Justice in Urban Musical Experience," paper presented to American Folklore Society conference, Providence, Rhode Island, November 2013

"Issues of Representation and Presentation in Public Culture Media Production: Radio, Archives and Record Labels," organizing chair of panel presented at American Folklore Society conference, Nashville, Tennessee, November 2010

"A "new" New Deal: Alan Lomax and the Radio Research Project," paper presented at Society for Ethnomusicology conference, Mexico City, Mexico, November 2009.

"Beyond Advocacy," forum panelist and presentation with Jeff Titon (Brown), Aaron Fox (Columbia), Jeffery Summit (Tufts), and Erica Haskell (Brown), at Society for Ethnomusicology conference, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, October 2008.

"But What if They Call the Police?: Accepting an Activist Role in Urban American Ethnomusicological Fieldwork," paper presented at the International Council for Traditional Music conference, Vienna, Austria, July 2007.

"Radio Vérité: The Radio Documentary as Applied Ethnomusicology," paper presented at the International Council for Traditional Music conference, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, England, August 2005.

"Building Community Through Sound: LPFM Radio and Musical Activism in an Urban Neighborhood," paper presented at the Over the Waves: Music in/and Broadcasting conference, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, March 2005.

## HONORS

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2010 Archie Green Fellow, with Dr. Nick Spitzer of *American Routes*, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress

- For series of programs titled "Routes to Recovery," produced and broadcast 2010-2011

## ACADEMIC SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS & SERVICE

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### Academic Societies:

Society for Ethnomusicology

- Local Arrangements Committee, New Orleans 2012
- Applied Ethnomusicology Section, co-chair, 2009-2015
- Invited member of committee to establish SEM Public Sector Prize
- Award Committee member for Judith McCulloh Public Sector Prize, 2015



**THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**

101 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE, S.E.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540-4610

AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER  
202-707-5510 (Voice)  
[folklife@loc.gov](mailto:folklife@loc.gov) (Email)

August 10, 2016

Public Programs  
National Endowment for the Humanities  
Public Programs  
400 7<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20506

Dear Colleagues,

This letter is written in strong support of the proposal resubmitted to NEH by *American Routes*: **"Exploring and Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story and Song."** The highly regarded public radio research and production team based at Tulane University in New Orleans proposes to expand upon and continue their successful work in bringing humanities issues to a broad public through thematic programs of carefully chosen music, songs and narrative augmented by interpretive comments of humanists and artists.

Each week *American Routes* defines vernacular humanities with selected examples that aesthetically display a range of values in American life in ways that are critical and celebratory, edifying and engaging. At the center of the definition of vernacular humanities is the primacy of cultural expression from source communities, and various ways in which native intelligentsia, artists and community savants may represent themselves in both the aesthetic and instrumental vernaculars of everyday life. The updated program treatments deal with socially current issues: the culture arising around appreciation of local environments and environmentalism in "This Land..."; as well as sense of place in "Music in New York City," and "Miami," the enduring healing, passion and joyful powers of the blues and gospel music exemplified by heroines Bessie Smith and Mahalia Jackson; migration from homelands and new, though "crooked" roads home to cultures and communities; the role of music makers and more broadly speaking, the sound creators and documentarians in the human experience from Angola prisoners to media and art of the last century; and, finally the provocative notion of the "authentic future" of cultures and community life.

Program producer Nick Spitzer works with a national team of humanities scholars as advisors and media producers familiar with issues of cultural representation and critical heritage studies. They and a host of cultural specialists address the processes and symbolic combinations that creatively lead to popular roots music and while explicating the roots of popular music in a critical way.

*American Routes* is an award-winning national radio series now in its 18th year on the air on 300 stations reaching up to a million listeners each week with two-hours of distinctive vernacular arts and humanities programming. Based in New Orleans, the program is a rare remaining cultural program in public radio that is both engaging and noted for its breadth and depth in addressing American vernacular cultural meanings through music. *American Routes* programs such as those proposed to the NEH are curated and hosted by Nick Spitzer, a renowned folklorist and professor of anthropology at Tulane University. One of Dr. Spitzer's great talents is in making plain and engaging the ways in which humanities issues play out and are expressed through songs and music at the intimate level of community life and often extended as shared vernaculars into popular culture accessible to a variety of wider audiences.

*American Routes* is produced in collaboration with Tulane University faculty and a highly regarded staff of public radio professionals and academic colleagues that include jazz archivist and music historian, Dr. Bruce Raeburn and noted contributing humanities project scholars: folklorist and music writer John Szwed (Columbia/Yale); cultural historian Glenda Gilmore (Yale); gospel ethnomusicologist Joyce Marie Jackson of LSU's African and African American studies program (LSU); William Ferris (North Carolina), blues scholar and former NEH chair; Steve Zeitlin of City Lore in NYC; noted NYC public folklorist Robert Baron; and Richard Kurin (Smithsonian Deputy Secretary for Museums, Arts and Culture). These humanists are augmented by the seasoned *American Routes* production staff under veteran researcher, producer Garrett Pittman (M.A. Tulane), along with a wider network of award-winning contributing producers and NPR regulars who have worked at or with *American Routes* over the years such as Emily Botein (New York), the Kitchen Sisters (San Francisco), Gwen Thompkins (New Orleans) and Margaret Howze (New Orleans) among others.

*American Routes* has a strong track record of using words and music to explore the intersection between contemporary American culture and the aesthetic traditions and creativity of the nation's regional, ethnic, tribal and occupational groups. Each week host and producer Nick Spitzer takes listeners on a two-hour journey to the heart of American community and vernacular cultural life by employing music, narrative, original interviews, archival audio and documentary segments. More recently he has extended the program to global interests with cultural diplomacy tours in China bringing cowboy music to Inner Mongolia, gospel musicians to Beijing and Shanghai, and Cajun and Tex-Mex bands Nanjing, Guangzhou and Harbin.

I have enthusiastically agreed to continue as a national advisor to this on-going, flowing broadcast project. I am prepared to assist with content advice, script review, and especially guidance in locating archival holdings that relate to the series topics. This is public humanities at its best, girded by scholarship and concern for our future as a unified nation of many cultures of, by, and for the people. It comes at a time when basic civility, tolerance of multiple cultural sensibilities, and a too often unexamined populism require a means to demonstrate what Americans gainfully share as a people and what favorably distinguishes us as a plural society. **"American Routes-- Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story &**

**Song"** promises to not only document the past and present world of culture-bearers and vernacular humanists, but to make these thoughts and aesthetic forms accessible on a weekly basis to a broad audience of Americans concerned about where we are headed as a nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Peterson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Elizabeth Peterson, Director  
American Folklife Center  
Library of Congress  
[epet@loc.gov](mailto:epet@loc.gov)



Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

**Daniel Sheehy, Ph.D.**  
**Director and Curator, Emeritus**

August 9, 2016

National Endowment for the Humanities  
Washington, DC 20506

Dear colleagues:

I write to urge approval of the application requesting support for public humanities two-hour “radio specials” as part of the weekly *American Routes* radio series, directed by Dr. Nicholas Spitzer, renowned radio producer and host and Professor of Anthropology at Tulane University. I have followed this series over all of its nearly 18 years. My first acquaintance with the project concept was when the program I directed at the National Endowment for the Arts funded the initial pilot series.

*American Routes* is one of the most innovative and impactful public humanities projects I have experienced. Spitzer’s series as an engaging window into the diversity and currents of American culture has only improved and matured over time. His current concept—“*American Routes: Exploring and Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story & Song*”—is brilliant and strategically well poised to benefit large numbers of Americans during a time when migration, identity, and creolization, against a backdrop of fundamental demographic shifts, cause us to look to our “heritage” as a guide. I place heritage in quotes to highlight the fact that our legacy of the past is constantly under construction in order to increase its utility in forging a meaningful and fruitful future. This, I expect, is how “authentic” will be defined: a confident, informed populace in touch with itself as a cultural community and actively engaged in forging its cultural future. With this in mind, the program entitled “Authentic Future” is especially intriguing.

*American Routes* is one of the most effective tools I could imagine to achieve the project’s stated goals. I have long admired Spitzer’s genius at presenting content that is rich in humanities substance, is engaging musically and culturally, and instills in its listeners a “bottom-up” sense of what it means to be American. This particular project is a logical extension of the value of our nation’s (and other nations’) tradition-based assets as a means of communicating cultural values and achievements across national boundaries in the form of diplomacy. Its goal of fostering broader public understanding of the dynamics at work will have a wholesome effect on our population as we look to build a future based on both self-discovery and mutual understanding.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings  
P.O. Box 37012  
MRC 520  
Washington, DC 20013-7012

I have been invited by Dr. Spitzer to serve as a national-level consultant to the upcoming season of programs and features. As former director of the National Endowment for the Arts Folk & Traditional Arts division, Director and Curator Emeritus of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, former supervisor of the Smithsonian's Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, and current John Simon Guggenheim Fellow, I am glad to assist Dr. Spitzer any way that I can. With particular expertise in Latino musical traditions, the programs "Miami," NYC Immigration," and "Roads Home" will likely present ripe opportunities for consultation.

A major strength of *American Routes*, of course, is Nick Spitzer himself. His lively, creative mind and extraordinary ability to express complex issues in graspable terms using music is impressive. He has assembled a sterling team to produce *American Routes* at the highest technical level. *American Routes* is a sound investment of precious NEH funds, and I urge you to lend it your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Sheehy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Daniel Sheehy, Ph.D.



Department of English: Folklore Studies Program

4400 University Drive, MS 3E4, Fairfax, Virginia 22030  
Phone: 703-993-1178; Fax: 703-993-1161

Debra Lattanzi Shutika  
Chair & Associate Professor

August 10, 2016

Nick Spitzer  
Professor of Anthropology  
Producer of American Routes  
Tulane University

Dear Professor Spitzer,

It is my pleasure to serve as an advisor for the “Roads Home” program that will address cultures in reverse migration or who are purposefully staying in a homeland despite economic and other forces that encourage migration.

As an expert in migration between the United States and Mexico, I will draw on my current and past work with Mexican and other Latino immigrants in the U.S., Mexico and Central America. I have worked extensively with Mexicans in southeastern Pennsylvania and in the Mexican state of Guanajuato, documenting what I have termed the “migrant lifecycle” of migration and return.

Central to this process is participation in community-based events—festivals, weddings, baptisms, quinceañeras and funerals—that reaffirm migrant identity as members of their home (sending) communities. In this respect, participation in expressive culture is essential to reaffirming one’s identity as a member of the community, especially for those who will live the majority of their lives abroad.

More recently, I have documented the experiences of Latinos in Northern Virginia and their struggles to maintain their cultural identity in the midst of anti-immigrant activism from native-born Americans. In these instances, migrant communities are expected to minimize their cultural expression to better “fit in” to the suburban community where they have settled with their families.

I look forward to working with you on this project.

Sincerely,

*Debra Lattanzi Shutika*  
Debra Lattanzi Shutika

## Debra Lattanzi Shutika

Chair, Department of English  
George Mason University  
Phone: 703-993-1170  
E-mail: [dshutika@gmu.edu](mailto:dshutika@gmu.edu)  
Web: <http://debralattanzishutika.com>

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### EDUCATION & ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

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**PhD, Folklore and Folklife.**

**Graduate Certificate in Urban Studies**

The University of Pennsylvania, May 2001.

**MA, Folklore and Folklife**

The University of Pennsylvania, May 1998.

**MA, English Literature**

George Mason University, May 1993.

**BS in Nursing**

West Virginia University School of Nursing, May 1987

**Associate Professor**, Department of English, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. 2007--present

**Assistant Professor**, Department of English, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. 2001—2007

### PUBLICATIONS

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#### ACCEPTED:

*Forthcoming* (December 2015). "Mirrors" (fiction, 1500 words). *Abundant Grace: Fiction by Washington Area Women*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Richard Peabody, Ed.

#### UNDER REVIEW:

"They Damage Houses: An Ethnomethodological Study of Foreclosures, Suburban Blight and Anti-Immigrant Sentiment." (with Carol Cleaveland).

"Narratives of Body and Place: Bodies in Place of Narrative."

#### IN PROGRESS:

*Diversity and Difference: Migration and Belonging in a Multiethnic World* (book manuscript)

"Mexico" (fiction, 3,500 words)

*The Other Kate*, A Novel (85,000 words).

2012. "Place and the Politics of Local Identity: Belonging and Immigrant Settlement in American Suburbia," *The Role of Place Identity in the Perception, Understanding, and Design of the Built Environment*. Herman Casakin, Ombretta Romice and Sergio Portia, Ed. London: Bentham.

2011. *Beyond the Borderlands: Migration and Belonging in the United States and Mexico*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. **Winner of the 2012 Chicago Folklore Prize.**

2008. Cinco de Mayo: The Symbolic Construction of Local Politics and Ethnic Relations. In *New Faces in Places: The Changing Geography of American Immigration*. Douglas S. Massey, Ed. New York: Russell Sage, 274-307.

2006. *Fueron al Norte y volvieron: La peregrinación del retorno (To El Norte and Back Again: The Pilgrimage of Return Migration)*. Trans. Felipe Ortega Gomez. Moroleón, Guanajuato, Mexico.

2006. The Culture of Poverty Theory. *The Encyclopedia of Appalachia*. Rudy Abramson and Jean Haskell, Eds. Johnson City, TN: East Tennessee State University Press, 845-855.

2005. Bridging the Community: Nativism, Activism and the Politics of Inclusion in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. In *New Destinations: Mexican Immigration in the United States*. Rúben Hernández-Léon & Victor Zúñiga, Eds. New York: Russell Sage. 103-132.

### CURATED PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

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**Baile Folklórico Boliviano**, September 29, 2012. Bilingual interpreted performance of eight Bolivian Folk Dances (with Amy Slade and Rhina Ascensio). <http://www.arlnow.com/2012/07/19/bolivian-cultural-night-comes-to-arlington/> (Originally scheduled for July 21, 2012, rescheduled for weather.)



**Text and Community, 2008.** Organized events around the reading of Luis Urrea's *The Devil's Highway*. Events included reading by Urrea, Film Festival, Writing Contest, Immigration Dialogues (with ICAR), live performance by Albany Park Theater Company, Viajeros art exhibit . <http://ur.gmu.edu/specialevent/immigrationforum/>

**Cher Shaffer: a Retrospective.** Fall 2002. Exhibit and lecture by Appalachian Folk Artist Cher Shaffer.

## SELECTED INVITED PRESENTATIONS

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"Balancing the Personal and Professional as Department Chair." Annual Meeting of the Association of Departments of English (Modern Language Association). Arlington, VA. June 2015.

"Mexicans, Migration and Mushrooms: the Kennett Square Case." University of Pennsylvania Urban Studies Colloquium. Philadelphia, PA. November 15, 2011.

"Writing the Sense of Place/Writing Non-Fiction." Pages and Places Book Festival. Scranton, PA. October 1, 2011

"Beyond the Borderlands: Migration and Belonging in American Migrations. National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC. September 14, 2011.

"Anti-Immigrant Ordinances and the Latino Community." Panel: The Impact of Anti-Immigrant Ordinances on the

"Housing Rights of Everyone: Lessons from Manassas, Virginia. National Conference of La Raza (NCLR). July 24, 2011.

"Place and the Politics of Belonging." Botkin Lecture Series. American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Washington, DC. August 12, 2010.

## SELECTED ACADEMIC CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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"The Field as Classroom: Undergraduate Instruction in the Practices of Ethnography." Annual Meeting of the American Anthropologic Association. Washington, DC. December 2014

"A Needful Place: Immigrants, Suburbia, and the Multicultural Ideal," Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society. Providence, RI. October 2013.

"Teaching Applied Ethnography," Annual meeting of the American Folklore Society. New Orleans, LA. October 2012.

"The Battle to Belong," Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society. Bloomington, Indiana. October 2011.

"Folklore by the Numbers: Quantifying Folklore Studies Research." Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society. Nashville, Tennessee. October 2010.

"Landscapes of Discontent: "Saving" the Commonwealth for Future Generations.' Annual meeting of the American Folklore Society. Boise, Idaho. October 2009.

"Going Nativist: Nationalism, American Identity, and the 'Illegal Alien.'" Annual meetings of the American Folklore Society. Quebec, Canada. October 2007.

"Your Homeland is my Diaspora: the Mexican/Newfoundland Immigrant "Problem." Annual Meetings of the American Folklore Society. Milwaukee, Wisconsin. October 2006.

"Narratives of Body and Place: Mexican Traditional Health Practices in Southeastern Pennsylvania. "Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association. San Francisco, CA. November 2000

## FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS AND AWARDS

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**Center for Global Studies Small Grant, 2015**

**Chicago Folklore Prize, 2012. Award for the best monograph in Folklore**

**Students as Scholars Curriculum Development Grant, 2012, \$35,000 to redesign English undergraduate curriculum**

**Center for Global Studies Small Grant, 2006**

**National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend, 2006**

**Middle Atlantic Arts Foundation, Fall 2002 \$1500 for Cher Shaffer exhibit and lecture.**

**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**  
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
**CENTER FOR JAZZ STUDIES**

August 5, 2016

Dear Colleagues:

I am writing in support of American Routes' "Expressing and Exploring the Vernacular Humanities in Story and Song." I believe American Routes to be one of the most extraordinary radio programs I've ever heard, one so skillfully presented and so richly entertaining that it's easy to forget what kind of program it is – documentary, talk, music, news, cultural, or entertainment – because it is all of these. It is also the kind of program that television cannot do, and I wish to stress that point: the content of the program, its mechanics, its pace, its tone, all are brilliantly geared to the medium. This is why I am honored to have been asked to again play a part of this program.

I would serve as national adviser and commentator for several programs. The first, titled "Sound Visionaries," examines the innovations and artful contributions of sound artists and technologists who have discovered the nature and uses of sound. My contribution to this program will be to help set the framework for the discussion of sound exploration in general, and also to discuss the work of Harry Smith, whose *Anthology of American Folk Music*, a 1952 multi-disc record set of older and radically diverse music styles and songs, spearheaded the folk music revival and changed the baseline of American music. Those recordings influenced the work of Bob Dylan, Beck, Pete Seeger, the Grateful Dead, Bruce Springsteen, and dozens of other artists who have acknowledged his influence. But Smith went far beyond the *Anthology* in sound exploration, recording soundscapes of New York City, Boulder, and the countryside of New York State. I've discovered these and other contributions by Smith in my research for the first biography of Harry Smith that I'm writing, and they will be part of my commentary.

The second program I will be involved in is "The Authentic Future." The musics that have emerged from the bottom up in American culture have long and fascinating histories. But these histories need reinforcement and restatement because such creativity is invariably marketed as new, and sui generis, with little or no interest in their originators and their lives. Musics such as jazz, country music, rockabilly, gospel, zydeco, rock n' roll, and hip hop are intertwined and creolized, and their origins are part of the story of America itself. With the near elimination of music education in the schools and the erasure of music history that accompanies streaming and downloading, American Routes' efforts to spell out those now hidden histories is all the more essential.

"Routes" is something of an American institution, and one whose continuance is of great importance to me and so many others. There is nothing else like it on radio, TV or internet. It feels like a letter from home, even if that home is New Orleans and one has never even been there. It engages the senses and one's sense of belonging in a country so large and diverse that at times it may seem hopeless to try and understand it. American Routes is a sonic roadmap to America, and we need a map to find our way now, more than ever. I urge you to give this project serious consideration.

Sincerely,



John Szwed  
Senior Adjunct Research Scholar  
and  
John M. Musser Professor Emeritus of Anthropology,  
African American Studies, and Film Studies, Yale University

## **Attachment 8**

### ***American Routes* Exploring & Expressing the Vernacular Humanities in Story & Song**

#### **Work Sample**

## **WORK SAMPLE 1**

### **American Routes Timekeepers: The Art of Drumming with JM Van Eaton, Ziggaboo Modeliste, Tito Puente, Ben Riley and Shannon Powell**

A sample of an American Routes program previously broadcast that demonstrates the staff's ability to complete the proposed project. The production team for this program includes, Nick Spitzer, Jason Rhein, Garrett Pittman, and Nina Feldman.

See link to streaming audio:

Hour 1:

<http://americanroutes.wwno.org/player/show/954/hour/1>

Hour 2:

<http://americanroutes.wwno.org/player/show/954/hour/2>

*Program script follows.*

## **WORK SAMPLE 2**

### **American Routes Shortcuts: Sonny Landreth**

Sample of a secondary component we are developing to promote American Routes to new audiences. Five minute condensed versions of *American Routes* features are currently airing on WWNO in New Orleans and is available on their website. Our hope is to make this available to more stations and then to expand this into a weekly 15 to 30 minute podcast available through iTunes. This piece was produced by Nick Spitzer and Nina Feldman.

See link to streaming audio:

<http://wwno.org/post/american-routes-shortcuts-sonny-landreth>

**American Routes Timekeepers: The Art of Drumming with JM Van Eaton, Ziggaboo  
Modeliste, Tito Puente, Ben Riley and Shannon Powell**

**SCRIPT**

**HOOR 1**

Open Bed: "Lil Liza Jane" Preservation Hall with Shannon Powell  
Shake That Thing (Preservation Hall recordings)

--

NS This is American Routes. From New Orleans. That's the drum language of Shannon Powell. Noted New Orleans native and Treme resident. Beloved for his traditional timekeeping, creative percussion and bon vivant personality.

Shannon Powell I hate when guys say, "Oh I got a job tonight." A job? I say your going to a party. Everywhere I play it's a party. That's the way I look at my life. Everywhere I play it's a party.

NS We'll talk with Shannon Powell. Plus a conversation with rockabilly drummer JM Van Eaton from Memphis. This show about rhythm makers and timekeepers also includes also includes music from Elvis and Johnny Cash.

In New Orleans, the city of African and Caribbean music sources, particular rhythms have long been heard at ceremonies, in the streets at secondlines, and from Mardi Gras Indians. Over the years these sounds moved to clubs, studios, and radio.

*Tap Dancing Audio*

NS I made this recording on Royal street years ago when two young shoe shiners were attracting customers with tap dance. Rhythms of the shoe business lead to show business on American Routes.

"Feet Don't Fail Me Now" Dirty Dozen Brass Band  
Feet Don't Fail Me Now (Jazz)

"Doin the New Low Down" Bill Robinson  
Stars of the Apollo (Columbia)

"Get Rhythm" Johnny Cash 2005  
The Legend of Johnny Cash (Columbia)

---

NS Johnny Cash ... raised in the rural AK Delta during the Depression... with his account of shining shoes to driveaway the blues ...in the big city. I'm guessing that was Memphis.

“Get Rhythm” 1956. Before that Bill “Bojangles” Robinson whose taps carried him from Richmond Virginia to the Apollo Theater... “Doin the New Low Down” And we started with New Orleans own seminal brass band in a triumphant take on “Feet Don’t Fail Me Now.”

Speaking of Memphis, we’ve got Elvis with one the greatest recordings with his drummer DJ - Dominic Joseph Fontana--a former Shreveport altar boy who went on to play strip joints ... where he said he learned to follow Elvis’s hips when the crowd was too loud to hear the King sing. This 1956 hit was written by Leiber and Stoller : “Hound Dog” on American Routes with drummer DJ Fontana.

---

“Hound Dog” Elvis with DJ Fontana  
RCA (1956)

Program ID: Touche pas this is American Routes

“Laughin’ in Rhythm “ Slim Gaillard  
Laughing In Rhythm: The Best of the Verve Years (Polygram)

---

NS Slim Gaillard. The Afro-Cuban American Jazz vocalist and master of the secret language “Vout-O-Reenee,” for which he wrote a dictionary. He also spoke Spanish, German, Greek, Arabic and Armenian... and managed to laugh in rhythm there. 1951.

Our rhythm show continues in a moment with Jerry Lee Lewis’s drummer JM Van Eaton when American Routes returns.

---

zipper: “Raunchy” Bill Justis  
Sun Records Collection (Rhino)

---

NS This is American Routes talkin’ about influential drummers and rhythms. James Mac Van Eaton – better known as JM- was the house drummer in the early days of Sam Phillip’s Sun Records... backing up hit-makers like Roy Orbison, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis ...and appearing on this number with rockabilly heart-throb Billy Lee Riley and his Little Green Men [start “Red Hot” post on vocals for 37 seconds]

I asked JM Van Eaton what inspired him to get behind the drum kit and drive the band:

Nose: “Red Hot” Billy Riley

IN JMVE “I guess the first uh drummer that caught my eye was uh a little bit later on by the time I was in high school was the uh Dukes of Dixieland out of New Orleans. We could actually pick them up in Memphis, and they were live from the Roosevelt Hotel, which I just got to go by for the first time uh today, so that was pretty cool. But my first band was a Dixieland Band

"Darktown Strutters Ball" Dukes of Dixieland

NS Well, how does your drumming evolve into uh rock and roll?

JMVE Well, I think Elvis changed all that for everyone, especially in Memphis, and once the phenomenon hit, everyone wanted you to play Elvis stuff instead of uh "Darktown Strutter's Ball" y'know? They wanted to hear "That's All Right Mama." Eventually, you kinda worked your way into playing uh the music that they like, and then by the time Elvis had "Don't Be Cruel" and you can hear those drums, y'know, and uh Chuck Berry, and all those guys were comin' along, then the drums became more prominent, and kinda started steering me in that direction.

"Don't Be Cruel" Elvis Presley

I've had different interviews, and people asked me what influenced me, and I tell 'em uh gospel or rock-er-old time rhythm n' blues and so on and so forth, country music, but the thing that changed music and changed me and a lot of other people was when drums and guitars collided because forever, drums were taboo with guitars on the Grand Ole Opry. But when records start sellin' and then it starts becomin' a monetary money thing, then uh they take well maybe that's not so bad after all.

NS JM, Tell me how you got in the door at Sun. What leads you to being there on sessions?

JM Well, I think my being there was probably by accident, like a lot of things. I went in with the band I was playing with was called the Echoes. You could uh- Memphis Recording Service would uh let you pay fifteen dollars and cut an acetate dub.

NS That's what Sam called it, Memphis Recording Service.

JM Yeah, it was never called Sun Studios. It was Memphis Recording Service. And it's- Sun Studios just kinda happened because that's what Sun Records, so obviously it had to be Sun Studios, but uh now it's got Sun Studios on the sign out front, but in the fifties, it was Memphis Recording Service. But anyway, you could go in. Anyone could come in off the street, Sam would record – I think his slogan was "We record anything anytime anyplace."

"Trouble Bound" Riley

JM Jack Clement had to be there that day Cowboy Jack Clement. And uh produced us goin' in there. He had got the job 'cause he had just produced a record for Billy Riley called "Trouble Bound," and not only did Jack get a job from makin' that, but he got Riley a record deal at Sun, so I went in, and Jack was doin' the- cuttin' out a little acetate, and he started telling me about Riley and how he needed a drummer and how he just had a drummer out, and I thought, man, that's kinda what I wanna do anyway, y'know, and so they came to see me play, and lo and behold, they hired me, and they hired the bass player named Marvin Pepper, and we became uh part of, along with Roland James, uh we became Billy Riley and the Little Green Men.



NS Tell me a couple of the records you worked on with uh Billy Lee Riley.

JM Well, he already had a record out called Trouble Bound, which I did not play on. My first record with him that was released was Flying Saucer Rock and Roll,

"Flying Saucer Rock n Roll" Riley

NS Uh, a lot of people when you read the history, it seems like, y'know, everyone thought that Riley was gonna, well, take off like a flying saucer in the world of rock and roll.

JM Well, he had the looks, had the best band, because all the musicians, they would come to hear us play, and that's a compliment. We chose to play rock and roll. It wasn't that we couldn't play jazz or we couldn't play big band, we couldn't play whatever. But we wanted to play this new music, man. We wanted to play rock and roll.

NS Where and when do you meet Jerry Lee, and how does that lead you to working with him on the sessions?

JM Well, I met him through Jack Clement was havin' an audition with this guy from Louisiana, said he's a piano player, and of course, we were all into guitars then. I mean, why's he bringin' a piano player up here? So he came up from uh Faraday, Louisiana, and he had his uncle with him, J.W. Brown, and I came in and when I saw these guys, I kinda, I took a step back, 'cause I said we're supposed to be recording rock and roll. You're supposed to have an Elvis look or look like y'know one of these guys with a guitar, but it wasn't that way. Jerry was at the piano, and J.W. Brown had his little white rhythm guitar,

"Crazy Arms" Jerry Lee Lewis

JMVE During the session, we took a little break, and Jack Clement, the engineer, asked Jerry if he knew the song "Crazy Arms," which was the #1 song on the country charts by Ray Price, and Jerry said, "Yeah, I think I know that," so he kicks it off and by now, Roland has left the studio. I was the only one in the studio with Jerry.

NS So no guitar at that point.

JM No guitar at that point.

NS No bass.

JM No bass, so it's just me and Jerry. And we don't think we're cuttin' a record. We just havin' an audition to see if he knows "Crazy Arms," you know, Jack wanted to hear him sing this song, 'cause everyone loved "Crazy Arms," and uh how you gonna top Ray Price, you know? But we do it anyway, and uh I'm tryin' to find this little beat that'll fit the song, 'cause I've never played "Crazy Arms" before, and uh by the time we get

through, I say, "I think I got it! Let's take it again!" and they say, "Nah, that's good enough, we'll take that cut."

NS It seems that a lot of times at Sun, when the passionate inspiration was there, it really was one take. It was like live, hanging out, jamming moment where you're not gonna improve on something, really.

JMVE Man it was so new and fresh to hear that it just seemed to roll off the- I mean it was something magic about the place and the sound, so uh it just happened, you know.

NS Well, a lot of cosmic stuff was happening.

JMVE Exactly! Flying Saucer Rock and Roll, man.

NS Well, JM Van Eaton, thank you so much, not just for talking to me on American Routes, but for keepin' rockin' all these years.

JMVE Oh, man, I appreciate it so much. Thank you for havin' me.

OUT "Thank you for having me."

OUTRO Talking with JM Van Eaton backstage at the 2015 Ponderosa Stomp in New Orleans.

Out of all of Jerry Lee's recordings featuring JM, few were as memorable or controversial... as this 1957 take on Big Maybelle's song... shocking the Bible Belt with it's rocking rhythm and risqué lyrics... (start music) "Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On" ... on American Routes

---

"Whole Lotta Shakin'" Jerry Lee Lewis (5 second intro)

XXX (xx)

"Down Yonder We Go Ballin'" Smiley Lewis

XXX ((xx))

---

New Orleans pianoman Smiley Lewis with the rhythms of "Down Yonder We Go Ballin'" from 1956 It has the influence of NTrad jazz with what sounds like a banjo driving the tempo. Hey some people call the banjo a drum ...with strings attached. And we'll hear the great jazz banjo and guitar player Danny Barker in a quick minute on AR.

---

zipper: "Funky Banjo" Don Vappie

---

I'm NS with our program about rhythm. The influential jazz banjo and guitar player Danny Barker is featured on one of my favorite recording, Jazz a la Creole on GHB Records. It's an anthology of 78s some in French from the late 1940s, Here's Danny Barker on vocal and guitar with a march beat on a Mardi Gras Indian song "Indian Red" on AR.

---

“Indian Red” Danny Barker in the 1940s Danny Barker guitar, Don Kirkpatrick piano, Haywood Henry bass, Johnny Williams and Fred Moore,  
Jazz a la Creole (GHB Records)

“It Aint My Fault” Smokey Johnson Time  
XXX (XX)

---

No... “It Aint My Fault” Smokey Johnson on drums-- a backbone of NO jazz, funk soul and R & B. he in Fats Domino’s band and is credited with giving more kick into the Motown percussion sound. “It Aint My Fault” was sampled by Mystical and many others in the rap world. Late in life Smokey got a legal settlement that paid for some of his influence.

---

Another New Orleans rhythm to the bone man is Shannon Powell

---

Shannon Powell 13:30 with opening bed running under intro “Bucket’s Got a Hole in it”

INTRO He grew up in Treme the black neighborhood next to the French Quarter, and never left. Powell’s traveled around the world with Wynton Marsalis and Harry Connick Jr, but he credits Baby Dodds, Danny Barker and the Preservation Hall Jazz Band for teaching him to stick with the tradition. Shannon also notes the power of holy music from the Spiritual Church that he still attends Sundays in Treme.

----

SP Living next door to St. Philip St church of God and Christ, which was what we called a spiritual, sanctified for the Holy Spirit. And I was a little boy and I used to be playing outside next door to the church, me and my friends, and we would hear this great rhythm coming out of the church all the time. You know, the ladies were playing the tambourines. And they had gentlemen on the organ, and they had other gentlemen on the drums- actually, the preacher was the drummer. You know, he preached and played drums. And I mean he played drums like Baby Dos. I mean he had a unique sound with the snare drum and the bass drum you know

And I tell ya, when you talking about a spirit, and see the ladies would play this:

*Demos with Tambourine: sings along*

SP See what I’m sayin? They playin’ that, and the preacher playin’

*Demos drum beat again*

SP So right there, and the people are clapping, you know, everybody else is clappin on 2 and 4, see what I’m sayin? And it’s really a moving rhythm that just captures my heart and my eyes because I was like “wow, that almost sounds like second line.” Because you know, I’m born and raised in the neighborhood, where I hear second line music every day. So as a kid, I’m trying to put this together. But back then, the old people used to say,

oh that's not second line, this is God's music, this is religion music.

NS But right at the middle of it as much as the preacher, was the drummer.

SP The service was always about the music, more than anything, you know what I'm saying? When those people came out of there, they were soaking wet, you know what I'm saying? They lost a few pounds.

NS Well it takes you out of the church, right, not like you never go, but it carries you to Preservation Hall to the streets, tell me about taking the spirit to these other places, to the club...

SP That's right, well that's what I said, that's when I found out that the music was all related. And you know, listening to the pastor in the church playing those press rolls and then being able to be introduced to Preservation Hall with Mr. Said Frasier, and Paul Barbarin and Louis Barbarin, and hearing exactly what I was just telling you, a very similar song:

*Sings: This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,*

Ok, now that's another spiritual. Listen now, this here:

*Plays: oh, little Liza, Little Liza Jane.*

See what I'm sayin?

*Sings more*

See, that's the same rhythm!

NS Love takes many forms, Shannon

SP And then they had another thing that they played, uh uh uh,

*Plays fast, Glory glory hallelujah, since I laid my burden down...*

SP Now listen to this one:

*Whistles Mardi Gras song*

SP SO that tells me that the drummer that played on that record with Fats was from the church! Cause that's the same beat he played!

NS And a little Professor Longhair whistle doesn't hurt

SP Alright, alright. So you know, the music is all related.

NS Do you see New Orleans connected to Africa or the Caribbean? How do you see it tied in?

SP Habanero. African melodies, I mean Spanish melodies, African rhythms.

NS Right, of the Caribbean yeah.

SP And the Beguine, which is from Brazil

*Plays*

SP That's a second line beat. See, all that's related. Bossa Novas, all that

*Plays*

SP All that's related, it's family. You know, it just comes from different countries but it's related, it's the same rhythm.

NS But you need somebody to help you put things together sometimes, and you did meet up with Danny Barker when he came back from NYC as a producer and a banjo guitar played.

SP Yeah, I was a young man when he came back, he had been in New York for 30 years. Had heard so much about him from other musicians that I had happened to be raised up under and was so thrilled to be able to meet him, James Andrews father, James Sr. was the one who introduced me to MR. Barker when I was about 11, 12 years old. And he happened to come to this bar I was sittin in every Sunday. I was real young; I could hardly touch the pedals. A place called the Three Brothers Lounge, which is in on the corner of my house, of St. Philip and Treme. And every Sunday they had a band there called the AFBs. And they were really good! And on Sunday, they would make about three stops to three different barrooms in the neighborhood and they would play for three hours in each place. It was amazing. And they would let me come in and my favorite- my feature song was the Bourbon St. parade

NS Oh yeah.

SP And they would pass the hat, you know, and I would come out of there sometimes with 70, \$80. And we're talking about in the 70s, and those guys would only gig for \$40 back then a night. And I come out with \$70, \$80 in my hat! For one song!

NS I bet you still do Bourbon St. Parade don't you?

SP All my life, that's one of my favorite songs written by the great Paul Barbarin.

NS Well you've been concerned at times I think about people breaking away from deep New Orleans tradition.

- SP Well, I'm 53 years old, and I tell people all the time, when I was a kid playing music in the Treme, I was the only kid. I was hanging out at Preservation Hall cause I met the owner, Mr. Alan Jaffe, he was very kind to me, invited me to come over as a kid and listen to the music and sit in with some of the bands. He said, why don't you try to find some other kids, make you a little band. Well I did that, I didn't have no success. But then all of a sudden in the 80s, out of the clear blue sky there were kids everywhere started playing music.
- NS Do you feel like you're somebody that, you gotta defend traditional music, or do you just play it?
- SP A lot of young musicians today, not only in the Treme but all over the city of New Orleans, they just don't have the understanding of how urgent this music is and how serious and how important it is that we uphold the tradition and the respect for the people that have paved the way for us to be able to do what we're doing. Things are very easy today being a musician in New Orleans, as opposed to back then. A lot of those great musicians played for dirt cheap in New Orleans, and never got the acclaim that they deserved.
- NS Well they had other jobs; they were plasterers and carpenters and –
- SP That's right!
- NS And plumbers and stone masons, and all those 7<sup>th</sup> ward guys
- SP Today's time is so different, and the kids don't really appreciate it or, or embrace it like they should, you know what I'm saying? You gotta be humble.
- SP You know, Danny Barker taught me and a bunch of other young musicians how to make the job look like it's fun.
- NS Showmanship
- SP Yes, don't sit up there and look like you're angry, don't be lookin at your watch, trying to see what time it is, if it's time to get off, you know, because that doesn't show that you're enjoyin what you're doing. Music is fun. You know, I mean I tell people all the time, when I go on a gig, I don't look at it like some guys. I hate when guys say "oh man, I got a job tonight." A job? What are you, a plasterer? What are you, a carpenter? "No, I play music." I said well no, you goin to a party. Because that's the way I look at my life, it's a party. Everywhere I play, it's a party
- NS You got a unique style it seems to me, and maybe you share it with other New Orleans drummers, you tell me. I hear a lot of rim shots, I hear a lot of little, high pitched things, maybe on the blocks or on something. You create all these little images and figures around it.

SP     Yeah I learned that from Baby Daz

*Audio from Baby Daz*

SP     What he was doing was decorating. You know, like you bake a cake, and after you bake the cake you have to decorate it now. Well once you bake the cake which is the horns and the bass and all that, dee dee, then you start decoratin:

*Plays short quick on side of drums.*

*Scats*

You know how many people Louis Armstrong influenced that play bebop? (Laughs) He influenced all of em! Miles, Dizzy, you know? They wanted to learn how to play. How to solo. See? Solo you got to know the roots of the music to solo.

NS     But you know, don't young people always take the music that they're going to hear on the radio and records or a new sound for them and maybe they'll mix it with what they heard at home or some other place, but isn't that just the way life is, it changes?

SP     Oh yeah, that's why you know, my wife constantly reminds me of that when I get angry.

NS     So back in Treme, so much has happened since you were a little kid. You're still livin there, but there's been a big TV show about Treme, we got people talking about the neighborhood and trying to support it in all kinds of different ways; how has Treme changed since you were growing up?

NS     You played on the John Boutte theme song that was for the TV show Treme, yeah

SP     When we went and did that years ago, we had no idea that that song would become as famous as that, because we did it so long ago you know. And when it happened, I said to John I said, "That just goes to show you," you know, he came out smellin like roses with that song.

NS     Now, why do you stay in the Treme? Why do you still live there?

SP     Well, first of all, I'm livin in a family home. My grandparents bought that home in 1942, ok? They bought that house in 1942. My grandmother and my grandparents are both dead- my sister and my brother and my siblings, we all decided, well we will never ever sell the house, that's just the way it is.

NS     You'll stay in the Treme

SP     All my life. And it's such a historical place to live; you know I come out that door and I think about all my childhood, you know, where else would I wanna be?



NS Shannon Powell, I wanna thank you for visiting with me thought right now on American Routes

SP Thank you for having me

Pieces of the following song are played throughout the above interview:

1. Powell Live Demo
2. "Gimme My Money Back": Treme Brass Band, Gimme My Money Back
3. Powell Live Demo
4. "Bourbon St. Parade" : Paul Barbarin, Atlantic Jazz New Orleans
5. "Little Liza Jane": Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Shake That Thing
6. "Talking: Tom toms & rims" Baby Dodds Baby Dodds
7. Powell Live Demo
8. John Boutte: The Treme Song Jambalaya

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Talking about timekeeping with the exuberant and smiling New Orleans drum hero, Shannon Powell... Just when you think he's the leader of the rear guard in traditional jazz. You hear something like this (new music under). It's Shannon with Jason Marsalis on vibes playing a tune called Air Mail written by BG, James Moody and Charlie Christian in 1941 (vibes)

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"Air Mail" Shannon Powell with Jason Marsalis, 3:50 2012  
"Powell's Place" (Shannon Powell)

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Airmail with Shannon Powell drums and Jason Marsalis vibes on Powells 2012 recording Powell's Place.

We've got more rhythm kings coming up next hour with Ziggy Modelist of the Meters, Tito Puente the late King of the timbales, and Theolonius Monk's drummer Ben Riley.

Our program is underwritten by a major grant from the NEH... and from the Louisiana Dept of CR & T at LouisianaTravel -Dot Com. Louisiana Pick Your Passion... I'm NS and this is AR from PRX

Closing Bed "Air Mail" Shannon Powell with Jason Marsalis, 3:50 2012  
"Powell's Place" (Shannon Powell)

## **HOOR 2**

Open Bed: "Cissy Strut" The Meters

This is AR I'm NS in New Orleans where The Meters have been an iconic funk, soul and

rock band since the 1970s (post up on a good drum part). Joseph Zigaboo Modeliste, who goes by Ziggy, is the drummer for the Meters and master of New Orleans funk:

**Ziggy Tease** For people that always have a lot of problems in their day to day lives, funk would be like a release. Everybody have a different way of moving their bodies when they hear music. When I see people dance, that's like a battery for me.

Ziggy Modeliste will talk about the The Meters, their way with funk and the kind kind of funk he fell into when the band... disbanded. Also this hour a conversation from the Archives with the late Tito Puente El Rey de los Timbales -- the king of the Timbales in the NYC Latin scene and major influence on Santana. Plus Ben Riley who played drums for pianist Thelonious Monk... a true rhythmic enigma.

Let's start off with 2 definitively funky tunes with the Meters playing strong back-up... first, Lee Dorsey in 1969 on a song by producer Allen Toussaint's that needs no introduction... from me... on AR

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studio engineer's voice

"Every Thing I do Gonna Be Funky (From Now On)" " Lee Dorsey  
The Masters Lee Dorsey (Eagle Records 1997)

"Right Place Wrong Time" Dr. John  
Right Place, Wrong Time (XX)

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**NS** hoodoo rocker Dr. John with the Meters on the title track "Right Place Wrong Time" in 1973. Before that Lee Dorsey, singing "Everything I Do, Gonna be Funky," written by the late Allen Toussaint... with huge help from The Meters (Start bed)

**NS** In the 1970s the Meters brought New Orleans funk to pop music with second line and Mardi Gras Indian rhythms as the spines of their songs. They even added a touch of psychedelia ... Keeping the groove going for the Meters was drummer Joseph Zigaboo Modeliste ... I asked Ziggy about how he got his name (cut NS question)

**Ziggy Modeliste** In my neighborhood we all had nicknames. Nobody would use their real name. I was what you would call a jokester when I was a youngster so they gave me this name "Zigaboo." Somehow that name seemed to stick with everybody and from then on it was like I wore it like a jacket.

**ZM** I remember we used to go to these parties and it always be more guys at the party than girls and we'd always be there first. So what we did, we'd sit around and have refreshments and put the records on a box. We'd start playing on our legs to the record - playing to the drumbeats on our legs to the records.

**Cyrille Neville of the Neville Brothers** him and I loved the drums so much we practiced together. None of our peers were into music. They were all into football, basketball, and

stuff like that. Went into the high school band and learned how to read and stuff like that.

NS Now, did you every have any big musical heroes in the drum scene ?

ZM But most of my drum heroes were homegrown. Smoky Johnson was like my idol.

NS What is Smoky Johnson's style? How would you describe his basic?

ZM Well Smoky Johnson was a drummer's drummer. He could play anything.

ZM James Black, I loved the way James played.

NS Now between Smoky Johnson and James Black it seems you've got a pretty wide range.

NS When I think of James Black I think of a little different style, a little bit more of the jazz direction, more modern jazz, rhythm and blues some I suppose.

ZM He was really like an incredible player. He had so much control.

NS You know of all the genres that we've talked about, the only one that I haven't heard you say, is funk. Where does funk come from?

NS When you are using a word like "funk" it is one of those words like "cool," it can go a lot of places and maybe that's its great strength and power, but how would you describe what is funk

ZM People that always have a lot of problems in their day-to-day lives, funk will be like a release. When I play my drums all my tension goes away. It something that will make you get up out of your seat whether you could dance or not. That was the whole hypnotic thing is it puts the spells on you. It gets you going to thinking, "if I'm dancing and having a great time, I can expel all the rest of the negative stuff that is going down."

NS How did you get the name The Meters? Is that like a water meter? An electric meter? A metering device could be almost counting time. I've always wondered where that name came from.

ZM Well, it has got a lot to do with the timing of the music. This would be around 1967, 1968. It was all of The Meters: Leo Nocentilli, Art Neville, George Porter, and myself. We were looking for a name that we could use. We all put some names on a piece of paper, put them in hat. Somebody expressed that Allen Toussaint came up with the name - at that time Allen Toussaint was being involved with us.

NS When you are an instrumental group, you almost become people's personal soundtracks.

ZM Yeah, it's like, you know, you have your... you're giving people a canvas and you say, "here is watercolors or whatever, you draw your own picture."

- NS Let me ask you about some of these song titles. I mean how about “Chicken Strut?”
- ZM When we was on the road we all traveled in a station wagon. All day long we tried to think of something to make each other laugh to keep from being so bored just driving down the highway. We was out on a farm somewhere. We said, what would happen if we had a bunch of chickens that was hip enough to be into the music?
- ZM We was playing instruments and percussion instruments with our mouths and Leo would start saying, “ook-a-cha, book-a-cho-a, book-a-cho-ah.” And while he’s saying that he’s beating on the back seat of the car. I would come in and try to say something that syncopation-wise would actually match up with that. So I would be saying, “boom-bank, boom-bang, ba-bab-la-ba-doom, boom-ba-dang-dang.” while he’s saying, “book-a-choo-ah, book-a-cha-cho.” And Art would say, “bam, cha-ung-ung.” *[Claps]*
- ZM We all said we had to do something with this. There is too much energy, you know?
- NS I think we know a groove when we hear it, but if we were to put it into a word meaning definition how would we describe groove?
- ZM It is a place where you go to. It is not something that.... give you a pulse. So you know every time your brain connects with. every time at a certain time while that is happening you going to... that always happen over and over. Now you have to have body movements to go along with that pulsation. This is a thing where you are relating to the music, but when you get to the groove, that is another level. You got to get so far deep down into that. This is what really creates a groove I believe. When you can actually see through these tempos and see through this repetition and you can mesh all that together along with the melody and stuff like that you can find a groove.
- NS You’ve been a player and a witness to so much amazing talent and New Orleans music and you’ve made so much great music. I wondered how you felt when you were there in sort of the limelight of the rock world that the Rolling Stones represented and you were out essentially opening for this band and reaching this new huge audience.
- ZM It was certainly an adrenaline rush. You get this underdog feeling that you got to go out there and you got to do something because when the Rolling Stones get out there they forget all about you. But we did manage to turn some heads. Keith and Charlie and those guys, they brought us into their world and say, “hey, come check this out. We think you are good enough.
- NS At what point do The Meters come to an end as a band and do you move on and leave town.
- ZM Well we disbanded in 1976 and quite frankly, myself personally, I was lost after that. I couldn’t find nothing I wanted to do. I was pro-Meters all the way. I had these thoughts that “well, there is only a few clubs to play here and like I’m competing against all my

personal friends for a job.

NS it seems to me that as you made that progression something else was happening which was the rise of Rap and Hip Hop and people start sampling your music.

ZM Well there is so many of them. Queen Latifah, Run DMC, Heavy D. Used a song we recorded called "Thinking."

NS Is there a tune on the new record that you feel brings together the worlds of California that you've been living in and the world of New Orleans that you came from in a way that puts those worlds together for you?

ZM Oh yeah, I've got this song called "Fat Tuesday." Dr. John was in my town where I'm living out now, Oakland, California, so I called Doc, I say, "Doc man, I need you to come out here and put some piano on this." He said, *[in a Dr. John voice]* "Hey Zig, why don't you put some words on that?" I said, "No John I'm just going to leave it open right now, but I want to hear you playing on it.

He's just a brilliant character. There is not nothing phony. It is just him. So this is like a California sound meets a New Orleans Mardi Gras sound. It worked out pretty good.

NS Joseph Zigaboo Modeliste. We appreciate you coming into American Routes to talk about it.

ZM Thank you so much for having me.

1. "Groovy Lady" The Meters The Meters Anthology: Funkify Your Life
3. "Whip It" Smokey Johnson It Ain't My Fault
4. "Mist" James Black I Need Attitude
5. "Cissy Strut" The Meters The Meters Anthology Funkify Your Life
6. "Here Comes The Meter Man" The Meters Anthology Funkify Your Life
7. "Chicken Strut" The Meters Anthology Funkify Your Life
8. "Look-Ka Py Py" The Meters Anthology Funkify Your Life
9. "Sophisticated Cissy" The Meters Anthology Funkify Your Life
10. "Honky Tonk Women" The Rolling Stones Singles Collection
11. "Honky Tonk Women" The Meters KickBack
12. "Dry Spell" The Meters Anthology Funkify Your Life
13. "Thinking" The Meters Anthology Funkify Your Life
14. "Girlz They Love Me" Heavy D Girlz They Love Me
15. "Phat Toos Day" Ziggy Modeliste I'm On The Right Track

OUTRO "Ziggy" Modeliste is still making music out in the Bay Area and came to town for a gig during Jazzfest. I kinda love that ziggy wrote and sings the Meters best known -- and least funky -- song. start music of next song) Its vintage is in a Creole tune and Children's rhyme .... Let's go to New Orleans Audubon Zoo... on AR

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They All Asked for You The Meters 27 seconds (including a couple outbursts)

XXX (XX)

--Fats Domino ID

“My Girl Josephine” Fats Domino

Greatest Hits Walking To New Orleans (Capital)

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Antoine “Fats” Domino on his 1960 hit, My Girl Josephine. A lot of the Fats Domino backbeat rhythm sound came from Earl Palmer, who grew up in the Treme and traveled at a young age on the black vaudeville circuit. Earl Palmer’s biography Back Beat is a good one and you get a sense of his huge influence out of New Orleans on rock and roll drumming.

We’ll be back on the beat with the Timbales king Tito Puente whose rhythm work lead to Salsa music and was a major influence on Santana ... coming up on AR.

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zipper: “Decarga Cacho” Israel “Cacho” Lopez

XXX (XX)

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I’m NS our program about drummers ==keeping ..and changing... time in styles both personal and cultural. So it seemed we should bring back this 1999 conversation with Tito Puente in the Bronx .

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Ernesto Tito Puente was born in New York City in 1923. His first break came when he joined Machito's Big Band as a teenager. He formed his own band a few years later, and literally brought his instrument, the timbales, to the foreground by moving them to the front of the stage. Tito was variously known as Ere de Timbales and the King of Mambo. When we spoke to him in 1999, he recalled his childhood days in Spanish Harlem.

TP As a young child, I was very percussive. I was bangin' on things all around the wall until the neighbors complained to my parents and told my mother, "Put that brat to study something! He's driving us crazy here! I started about seven years old studying piano at 25 cents a lesson, walk a few miles once a week. My parents were very poor, naturally. We were up in Spanish Harlem there, around 110<sup>th</sup> Street around there, and um I developed a lot of street music sounds because jazz was involved there, you know, with Dizzy Gillespie and all those people, and we had the great Machito Band at the time, and so that's where most of my roots came for jazz and Latin music.

NS What do you think it was that um got you to take the percussion part of the band and bring it out front?

TP What happened was, in the old days, all the rhythm sections are always in the back, all the pretty boys are in the front. You know, all the sax players and the trombone players an the trumpet player. So my boys had to look back towards me to get a cue to get on, see, so then one of my men, his name is Jimmy Frisaura, he was the one that suggested to me to go in the front and it'd be easier for them to get their cues, to go into the mambo,

and I just picked up the timbales and went out to the front by accident. It wasn't planned or anything, y'know, and I've been there for over 50 years now. All the bands do that now. All the rhythm sections are all in the front, and actually, I'm glad, 'cause that's what people dance to, is the rhythm anyway. They don't dance to the saxes or the trumpet or the trombone. They dance to the drum, the conga drum, the timbales, the bongo, whatever has the real basic rhythm to it. So I'm glad I'm in the front now, doin' that.

NS Now, for somebody who has never seen the timbales, tell me what the timbales are as percussion instruments?

TP Well, originally, these were kettle drums. They come from France. And when they came to the Caribbean area, Cuba particularly, they cut off the bottom. It was like half a drum, half a kettle drum, small kettle drum, which you play with the sticks, and it's a very powerful instrument, 'cause that's the one that keeps the band together and uh the other percussion men together, like the conga players or the bongo players. See? So it's a very important instrument, and I've been playin' it for so many years that uh they call me the King of the Timbales, which I'm very happy that they keep calling me that, because the day they call me the Queen of the Timbales, I'm gonna have to hang up.

NS Let's talk about some of your music that's made it out into the big popular world. A lot of our listeners know Santana and "Oye como va."

TP Well, Santana, naturally, he recorded that twelve and a half years after I did, but he really put the tune on the map. He did it as a rock and roll thing, and that's where you had his drummer, his guitar, the organ, and by takin' my tune, he really opened up like Latin rock around the whole world, of course, and he's made me a bigger name, naturally, but people don't know I'm the composer. They think that he is. But he mentions me all the time, and he plays that on all his concerts, and uh I get the royalty checks.

NS How does his version differ from your version? What should we listen for that's different from your version?

TP Well, he's got a good version with the guitar and all that, real good version. Mine is a bit more typical, like a cha-cha-cha type of rhythm and Latin feel, see?

NS When I think about some of the great traditional sounds, I guess that have really come out of Cuba, one is the rumba. What is the rumba?

TP Well, the rumba is the very up-tempo, fast thing. People confuse it, especially American people. They confuse the rumba with the kind of rhumba that Xavier Cugat used to play. He was called the King of the Rhumba in that day, but that kinda rhumba is different. That's R-H-U-M-B-A.

The rumba from Cuba is R-U-M-B-A, and it comes from different provinces in Cuba. It's very different to play a rumba.

NS What about mambo? You've given us a little on the rumba and its origins and where it comes from, what about the mambo?

TP Well, the mambo is a beautiful dance. Remember, dancing and music go together. I've always believed that, all my life. Mambo's another type of happy dancing, a little more up-tempo than the cha-cha, which is slower, or bolero, which is a very slow ballad type. It's a special type of music, and that's one I play a lot, mambo music.

Now they're calling it salsa, sauce, now they're calling it sauce, so I have to go along with the word now.

NS You don't like salsa too much?

TP Not the word. The word is not a musical terminology. Because salsa is like a tomato sauce, you know, spaghetti sauce. It's a commercial word, so I've had to join 'em. But they can call it whatever kinda word they wanna use next year, but I'll keep playing the same music I've been playin' for 50 years, okay? That's where I'm at.

The people love our music and or rhythms, and the music is now receiving a lot of recognition around the world. There is no bilingual problem anymore. In fact, like Charo, my friend, the other night, on TV, she said, "If you wanna live in the United States, you have to speak Spanish now."

NS Tito Puente, gracias para conversar con nosotros. It's a pleasure to speak with you about your life and your music here on American Routes.

TP Muchas gracias ustedes. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to say hello to all my people there.

Talking rhythm with the late Tito Puente the NY Latin Timbales King back in 1999. Shortly after He performed on the American Routes July 4<sup>th</sup> program on the National Mall.

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Cal Tjader was born to Swedish vaudevillian parents in St. Louis in 1925. He created a path to become a jazz modernist with an unusual cultural twist... as the best known player of latin jazz by a person not of Latin American descent as a vibraphone player. It's an instrument where rhythm and melody can ring as one... Tjader worked with Mongo Santamaria and Willie Bobo from Tito Puente's orchestra and formed the Cal Tjader Modern Mambo Quintet... (start music) here with the 1965 recording of "Soul Sauce."

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"Soul Sauce" Cal Tjader 2:25

Cal Tjader's Greatest Hits (Fantasy)

--- Hey Baby ID



“Straight No Chaser” Monk 2:50 +- \ 1951

Thelonious Monk: The Complete Blue Note Recordings (Blue Note)

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Pianist Thelonious Monk in 1951, with the wonderfully angular rhythms of “Straight No Chaser.” –Milt Jackson – vibraphone, and Art Blakey – drums

We’ll take a break for an unsquare dance in the studio and be back with more T Monk from the perspective of his later drummer...veBen Riley. When AR returns

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zipper: Brubeck “Unsquare Dance”

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This is AR where we have been “giving the drummer some props...

Open Bed: “Locomotive” Thelonious Monk (w/ Ben Riley) 1967

Straight No Chaser (Columbia)-

Ben Riley feature 8:00

Drum starts at :08 seconds in “Locomotive”

Ben Riley was born in Savannah Georgia, but moved at a young age to New York City. (post) He played the drums in the army, and back home, started playing professionally in his Sugar Hill neighborhood of Upper Manhattan. He played at the Savoy Ballroom and drummed for vocalists like Etta James, Sarah Vaughn and Nina Simone. But it wasn't until he started playing regular gigs at a club on the Lower East Side that he met the man who would change his life and career forever: Thelonious Monk.

BR I worked with three piano players. I worked six weeks in the club on the East side downtown, and Thelonious used to come in every night and go directly in the kitchen. I had no idea he was listening to me play. And when I was there with the third piano player, he came in and he looked up on the bandstand and he said to me – first time he ever spoke to me – and he said, "Who are you, the house drummer?" That Monday his manager called me and said “we down there at the studio and we want for you to come down and record there with Monk.” So I hung up. Cause I thought it was - friends of mine, we used to do that to each other. We used to say, “I’m from Duke Ellington’s band and I want you to come and play with us.” SO I thought it was one of the guys teasing me. And then it was- Harry turned out Harry Colomby, he said, “no, I’m not kidding- I’m Thelonious Monk’s manager, and we want you to come down to the studio because Thelonious wants you to record with him.”

NS Now, how much did you know about Theolonious Monk and his music when this invitation came?

BR I had been listening to him every night. I sat there at the bar and I would anticipate how I'd play with him.

NS Now, how difficult was it to play Thelonious's music? I mean, his tempos shift, he has all

kinds of unusual breaks and riffs

BR I said, "I thought we would rehearse," and he said, "why, you wanna learn how to cheat?" He said "you already know how to play." He said, "Play wrong and make that right."

NS So when you have a song, a tune like Straight, No Chaser that he had made a long time ago as a recording, what did you try to bring to something like that?

BR The swing, I tried to keep the beat. The flow of the music. Whoever was the strongest player, I would play like they played to keep the beat flowing.

BR The first waltz that he played, on Columbia records-

NS Oh, Ugly Beauty?

BR Yeah, I made that a waltz

NS Is that right?

BR Cause - we were at the studio I heard it in  $\frac{3}{4}$  so when they were runnin' down the rehearsal, I played a waltz beat behind it. He says, 'is that how you hear that?' I said, "yeah," he said, "keep that in."

NS I think that's gotta be his only waltz.

BR Yeah, I'm responsible for that.

BR What was beautiful about him, he said, "People look at me and say, 'Oh, he's crazy,' so I show em crazy."

NS How did he show em crazy?

BR He said, that's why he jump up and dance, or do some spins while we in the audience, he'd walk by you and do a spin or something. And it was really, really funny. He had a wonderful sense of humor, and he was very intelligent man. He was worldly and nobody knew it. The only people he would be relaxed with were the people he felt comfortable around. And it was made me great because we became friends. It wasn't just I'm working for you, I became his friend. Matter of fact, I think I was the only one- drummer, or musician that collected his money on a gig.

NS So he really trusted you.

BR See what happened, was his kids in the summer time would hang out with my kids if we was goin like to Boston or Philly or somewhere, he would hire a bus so that we could take our children and let them hang out with us while we were playing.

- NS      What I like about this, Ben, is that there's such an image of jazz and jazz musicians as these solitary figures to deepen their music, but you're telling me the tale of two family men who were friends, and whose kids played together around the music. That's a really great thing.
- BR      Yes, it was. Because the music was family.
- NS      When Thelonious passed, did you go to the funeral?
- BR      Yes, everybody was there. The church was just packed.
- NS      This was in Manhattan?
- BR      Oh yeah, over there on the East Side. Everybody came with good membrance of him. All the musicians, all who could get up on stage would play.
- NS      You've continued to examine Monk's music and in 2006 you recorded Memories Of T. It's got all the Monk compositions, arrangements by Don Sickler, 4 horns, guitar, no piano. Why no piano?
- BR      Well, decided to use a guitar. There was no Monk there, so we didn't have nobody that could really justify playing the music.
- NS      Are you playing out much these days?
- BR      When I can. I can play, it's just that I've got to be careful and move slower. But that has nothing to do with the music. See, it makes me learn from playin with Thelonious, I had to learn how to do it a different way.
- NS      Well Ben Riley, I want to thank you for swinging all these years, keeping time for Thelonious Monk and keeping his memory alive and all the great music that you have made.
- BR      Thank you.

The following musical selections are played in the interview above:

1. Straight, No Chaser
2. Ugly Beauty
3. Boo Boo's Birthday
4. Nutty (Ben Riley's tribute septet on Memories of T)

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Talking with jazz drummer Ben Riley about his days with Thelonious Monk...

Monk is still beloved in New Orleans as well so we'll say good bye on this program dedicated to timekeepers and rhythm makers with Monk's "The Bright Mississippi"

played by pianist Allen Toussaint

END Bed: 2009 intro time 7 seconds before horns; 30 before really picks up

“The Bright Mississippi” Allen Toussaint 5:07

The Bright Mississippi (Nonesuch)

Start bed

AR is produced at Tulane University’s SLA ...  
our program is underwritten by a major grant from the NEH... and from the NEA. As  
well as OffBeat :America’s Roots Music magazine at Offbeat.com.

AR Assoc prod is Garrett Pittman, Assistant producer is Nina Feldman, technical director  
is Jason Rhein. Lauren Callihan is development associate and Ken Mills is manager of  
station relations. Production assistants are Olivia Broslowsky, Tyler Michael and  
Gregory LeBlanc.

All AR programs stream from our website AR DOT O-R-G... where you can also  
support the program.

I’m NS... Until that time for AR from PRX

American Routes 2016©



# Budget Form

OMB No 3136-0134  
Expires 6/30/2018

Applicant Institution: *Tulane University*

Project Director: *Nicholas Spitzer*

Project Grant Period: *04/01/2017 - 12/31/2018*

[click for Budget Instructions](#)

	Computational Details/Notes	(notes)	Year 1	(notes)	Year 2	(notes)	Year 3	Project Total
			04/01/2017- 12/31/2017		01/01/2018- 12/31/2018		01/01/20__- 12/31/20__	
<b>1. Salaries &amp; Wages</b>								
Project Director/Host Nick Spitzer	(b) (6)	%	(b) (6)	%	(b) (6)	%		(b) (6)
Contributing Editor	(b) (6) /yr x 25% x 18 mo	%	(b) (6)	%		%		(b) (6)
Technical Director	(b) (6) x 75 days	%	(b) (6)	%	(b) (6)	%		(b) (6)
Program Associate Lauren Callihan	(b) (6) x 60 days	%	(b) (6)	%	(b) (6)	%		(b) (6)
Production Assistant	(b) (6) x 50% x 18mo	%	(b) (6)	%		%		(b) (6)
Transcription/Production Aides	(b) (6)/day x 120 days	%	(b) (6)	%	(b) (6)	%		(b) (6)
Station Relations Director	Based on carriage		(b) (6)		(b) (6)			(b) (6)
								\$0
<b>2. Fringe Benefits</b>								
Project Director/Host Nick Spitzer	23.2% of Salary		(b) (6)		(b) (6)			(b) (6)
								\$0
<b>3. Consultant Fees</b>								
Contributing Producers			(b) (6)		(b) (6)			(b) (6)
Contributing Web Feature Producers			(b) (6)		(b) (6)			(b) (6)
"Shortcuts" Podcast Producer			(b) (6)		(b) (6)			(b) (6)
Humanities Advisors			\$3,750		\$3,750			\$7,500
Music Advisors			\$2,000		\$2,000			\$4,000
Artist Fees			\$5,000		\$5,000			\$10,000
								\$0
<b>4. Travel</b>								
Feature Producer	5 Trips/3 days *		\$6,500		\$6,500			\$13,000

Spitzer (host/producer)	5 Trips/3 days *		\$6,500		\$6,500		\$13,000
							\$0
<b>5. Supplies &amp; Materials</b>							
Office supplies	\$400 per month		\$21,373		\$2,000		\$23,373
Production supplies	\$600 per month		\$4,200		\$3,000		\$7,200
music purchases (CDs and Downloads)	\$1000 per year		\$2,000		\$2,000		\$4,000
							\$0
<b>6. Services</b>							
Website Maintenance/Podcast Up	\$6000 per year		\$4,000		\$2,000		\$6,000
Technology Upgrades for Website design and maintenance			\$2,000		\$1,000		\$3,000
Outside Studio	\$175/hour x 50 hours		\$4,375		\$4,375		\$8,750
Podcast Hosting	\$350/year x 18months		\$300		\$225		\$525
Podcast Logo Design			\$1,000		\$0		\$1,000
Podcast Marketing			\$2,000		\$1,000		\$3,000
Advertisements	3 current ads @ \$1500		\$2,500		\$2,000		\$4,500
							\$0
<b>7. Other Costs</b>							
							\$0
<b>8. Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>Per Year</b>		<b>\$173,145</b>		<b>\$145,418</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$318,563</b>
<b>9. Total Indirect Costs</b>							
	<b>Per Year</b>		<b>\$438</b>		<b>\$438</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$876</b>
<b>10. Total Project Costs</b>	(Direct and Indirect costs for entire project)						<b>\$319,439</b>
<b>11. Project Funding</b>	<b>a. Requested from NEH</b>						
						Outright:	\$225,795
						Federal Matching Funds:	\$0
						<b>TOTAL REQUESTED FROM NEH:</b>	<b>\$225,795</b>

<b>b. Cost Sharing</b>		Applicant's Contributions:	\$58,084
		Third-Party Contributions:	\$35,560
		Project Income:	\$0
		Other Federal Agencies:	\$0
		<b>TOTAL COST SHARING:</b>	<b>\$93,644</b>
<b>12. Total Project Funding</b>			<b>\$319,439</b>

Total Project Costs must be equal to Total Project Funding ---->	(	\$319,439	=	\$319,439	?)
Third-Party Contributions must be					
greater than or equal to Requested Federal Matching Funds ---->	(	\$0	≥	\$0	?)