“Sing Together As Long as We’re Alive”: Writing Music, Teaching Culture

Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Expanded Description:
When writing, creating, and teaching about music and culture, is our engagement always, necessarily, political? Does it have to be about Trump? Why would we even ask these questions, and who gets to sidestep them, and why? In this panel, writers and educators discuss why we look to music for forms of resistance, survival, and the reclamation of joy in times of crisis. We’ll discuss craft and criticism; the urgency and pleasure of writing and talking about music with students and audiences; and the strengths and challenges we derive from and give back to our communities.

The arts and culture—and writing and education—are always under threat of silencing. Our panel consists of women of color who write and teach through words and music, thinking through the harmonies and dissonances of political and aesthetic resistance and regeneration. We belong to communities of women of color participating in heavy metal, hardcore, punk, border music, goth, indie, and classical scenes. As critics, commentators, educators, and musicians, we embody the strength in diversity that our forms need to thrive. We will discuss coverage, practice, working between forms (literary and musical), and literary citizenship in practical and political terms, leaving room for audience questions.

We’ll update our materials closer to the event, providing a list of discussion questions and points, as well as our musical links and samples. Thank you!

PANELISTS:

Yasmin Dalisay

Short Bio: [to come!]

Laina Dawes

Short Bio: Laina Dawes is a music journalist, cultural critic, and the author of “What Are You Doing Here? A Black Woman’s Life and Liberation in Heavy Metal (Bazillion Points, 2012 and 2019). She is also a fourth-year Ph.D. in Columbia University’s Ethnomusicology department.

Alison Kinney (mod)
**Short Bio:** Alison Kinney is the author of Hood (Bloomsbury Publishing) and of essays for The Paris Review Daily, The New Yorker, Harper’s, Lapham’s Quarterly, and The New York Times. In 2019 she became Assistant Professor of Writing (Nonfiction) at Eugene Lang College at The New School.

**Dianca London Potts**

**Short Bio:** Dianca London Potts earned her MFA from The New School and is the former online editor of Well-Read Black Girl. Her words have appeared in The Village Voice and elsewhere. She is a 2015 Pushcart Prize Nominee and a Kimbilio Fiction fellow. Her memoir is forthcoming from Simon & Schuster / 37 Ink.

**Michelle Villegas Threadgould**

**Short Bio:** Michelle Villegas Threadgould is a Chicana journalist covering Latinx issues and resistant art movements. Her work has been published in CNN, Pacific Standard, and KQED, and her essays were featured in the music anthology, Women Who Rock. Her book Why Rage Against the Machine Matters comes out 2020.