

# Disability Identity in Music Scholarship

Music & Disability Study Group session, AMS-SMT 2023

## Goal (What are we doing?)

As we have explored in recent Music & Disability conference sessions, many scholars with disabilities have been excluded from musicology as a discipline. Many disabled musicians are also missing from our research and teaching. However, these “outsiders” have the “inside” perspective on disabled music! What have we lost by pushing disabled musicians and scholars out? What could we gain if we chose to not only include them, but amplify their voices?

### **We’re going to find out this year.**

The Music and Disability Study Group seeks proposals for presentations at our annual session of the upcoming AMS/SMT national meeting (November 9-12, 2023) – either in person in Denver, Colorado or virtually. The topic we’d like our participants to explore is “What does it mean to be disabled in music scholarship?” – or, if you prefer academic jargon, “How does identity contribute to how we approach our positionality in musicology?”

Musicology is a long way from being ready for plain language. This call is not in plain language, even though we are trying to make it as accessible as possible. However, we are eager to move in that direction. Can you join us in that goal?

## Stakeholders (Who might want to participate?)

Everyone! We are especially eager to hear from those folks who have often not felt heard within musicology because of factors that distance them from academia. Maybe this has been because you convey an unconventional identity (“you don’t look right”), lack epistemic authority (“you’re not smart

enough”), have been left out of the conversation (“we don’t want your kinda talk here”), or any intersection of these and other positionalities (“you REALLY don’t belong here, do you?”).

## Topics (What do we want?)

We invite you to think about your position relative to disability and music. We aren’t asking you to disclose a specific diagnosis. However, we are interested in how you relate to the disability community.

- How does your relationship to disability change how you hear music?
  - For example: Autistic sensory intensity; musical Deaf gain; is synesthesia sometimes disabling/impairing?
- If you are disabled, what do you know about music that a nondisabled person might not know?
  - For example: do d/Deaf scholars understand Wawa differently from hearing folks? Do folks diagnosed with dementia understand Tailleferre’s late compositions better? Can Mad people have unique insights into Robert Schumann’s music?
- Are there ways that music is used to build disability communities? Can it contribute to care work?
  - For example: Krip Hop Nation, Paraorchestra, adaptive or inclusive music technologies
- What happens when we apply critical disability studies to the study of music?
  - We are not defining critical disability studies on purpose. If you choose to present on this topic, we expect that you will make your understanding of the approach clear as part of your proposal.

We encourage presentations exploring any genre or style of music from any part of the world and time period.

## Directions (How do you send us your ideas?)

You can propose as an individual or as part of a team.

To be considered, please email **Proposals.MusicDisability@gmail.com** by **March 12, 2023**:

- A description of what you want to present in as clear terms as possible (no strict word limit)
  - While we are happy for you to use [plain language](#) guidelines, this is not a requirement for proposals. However, we will be eager and prepared to assist presenters with creating plain language versions of their presentations.
- Whether you are proposing a 10-minute presentation (with 5 minutes for discussion) or a 20-minute presentation (with 10 minutes for discussion)
- Optional: an abstract in standard academic language (350 words)

We will let you know who we can bring into our session by March 16, 2022. Even if we can't incorporate your presentation into this specific conference session, we're really eager to learn about your ideas and work, and we intend to create opportunities to collaborate with you in the future.

We look forward to hearing from you!