

Curriculum Vitae

James Gordon Williams

Department of African American Studies
Syracuse University
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Syracuse, NY 13244
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Education

- 2013 Ph.D. in Integrative Studies (Critical Musicology), University of California, San Diego, Dissertation: *Crossing the Bar Lines: Locating 20th and 21st Century Strategies of Musical Resistance*
- 1999 M.A. in Music Performance and Composition, New York University
- 1996 B.M. in Jazz Studies, New England Conservatory of Music
- 1993 A.A. in Music, El Camino College

Teaching Positions

- 2021 – present Associate Professor of Music, Department of African American Studies, Syracuse University
- 2014 –2021 Assistant Professor of Music, Department of African American Studies, Syracuse University
- 2017 –present Faculty Affiliate, Goldring Arts Journalism Core Faculty, Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University
- 2015– present Faculty Affiliate, Department of Art and Music Histories
- 2014– 2014 Adjunct Music Appreciation Lecturer, Long Beach City College
- 2006 –2006 Adjunct Lecturer, American University

Publications

Books

Crossing Bar Lines: The Politics and Practices of Black Musical Space (University Press of Mississippi, 2021)

Journal Articles

Williams, James Gordon. "“The Root of all of this Music”: Randy Weston's Pan African Approach to Music Education." *Jazz and Culture* (University of Illinois Press) Vol. 4, no. 1, (2021): 33-67.

Williams, James Gordon. "Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah’s Critique of the Danziger Bridge Shootings." *Jazz Research Journal*, Volume 13, Numbers 1-2, 2019

Williams, James Gordon. "Black Muse 4 U: Liminality, Self-Determination, and Racial Uplift in the Music of Prince." *Journal of African American Studies* 21, no. 3 (2017): 296-319

Williams, James Gordon. "Crossing Cinematic and Sonic Bar Lines: T-Pain's 'Can't Believe It'." *Ethnomusicology Review* 19, (2014)

Williams, James Gordon. “Improvising on Feedback Piano: Aesthetic Discourses Behind Technology and Sound” in *Rethinking Improvisation: Artistic Explorations & Conceptual Writing*, edited by Henrik A. Frisk & Stefan Östersjö, 169-177. Lund University, Sweden, (2013)

Williams, James Gordon. “African American Influences on American Music” in *Music in American Life: An Encyclopedia of the Songs, Styles, Stars, and Stories That Shaped Our Culture*, edited by Jacqueline Edmondson, 17-23, Greenwood Press, (2013).

Artistic Research, Performances and Installations

Model Citizen, Here I Stand. Multidisciplinary Performance Exhibition with Crystal Z. Campbell Living Arts, Tulsa, Oklahoma, December 7th, 2018-January 18th, 2019

You are mine. I see now, I'm a have to let you go. Suné Woods, Fred Moten & James Gordon Williams. UCLA Hammer Museum, August 23, 2018

You are mine. I see now, I'm a have to let you go. Suné Woods, Fred Moten & James Gordon Williams. Light Work, September 13, 2017.

Outlaw Culture Music. Syracuse University, Community Folk Art Center, November 19, 2015

Solo piano improvisation for *World Premiere of Cauleen Smith's Crow Requiem & Speculations: Science Fiction, Chronopolitics, & Social Change*. Everson Museum, April 7, 2015

Public Lectures and Presentations

“Randy Weston’s Pan African Politics of Musical Education,” to be presented at the Society for American Music conference, Tacoma Washington, March 17-21, 2021 (upcoming).

“Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah’s Critique of the Danziger Bridge Shootings” presented at the International Society for Improvised Music (ISIM) Augsburg University, Minneapolis, MN, May 16, 2019.

“Breathing as Improvisational Strategy and Social Commentary in Experimental Music” presented at Humanities Center Faculty Fellows Dinner Presentations at Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, February 1, 2018.

“Black Muse 4 U: Liminality, Self-Determination and Racial Uplift in the Music of Prince” presented at the Purple Reign: An Interdisciplinary Conference on the Life and Legacy of Prince at the University of Salford, Manchester, England, May 26, 2017.

“Crossing Bar Lines: Improvising the Subject Through Unconventional Musical Practices” presented at Breathturns: Improvisation and Freedom Conference at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, June 26, 2016.

“Strange Fruitvale: Improvised Music as Protest Against Police Brutality” presented at Black Arts Initiative Conference at Northwestern University in Chicago, IL, June 4-6, 2015.

“Sun Ra’s Epistemologies,” at Guelph Jazz Colloquium at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. September 3-5, 2014.

“Crossing the Bar Lines: Locating 20th and 21st Strategies of Musical Equipose and Resistance” presented at African-American Music in World Culture: Art as Refuge and Strength in the Struggle for Freedom at Boston University, Boston MA, March 22, 2014.

“My Name Is Oscar: Improvisation and Social Death” presented at Yale University in New Haven, CT. April 2013.

“Improvising On Feedback Piano” presented at Yale Bouchet Conference on Diversity in Graduate Education at Yale University in New Haven, CT, April 2012.

“Improvising On Feedback Piano: Aesthetic Discourses Behind Technology and Sound” presented at the Rethinking Improvisation Conference in Malmö, Sweden, November 29, 2011).

“T-Pain Effect: The Politics of Representation in Autotune” presented at the Pop Conference in Seattle, WA, April 17, 2010.

“T-Pain Effect: The Politics of Representation in Autotune” presented at the Guelph Jazz Colloquium in Ontario, Canada. September 8-10, 2010.

“Critiquing the Stereotype of Wes Montgomery As Natural Musician” presented at the Museum of Making Music in Carlsbad, CA, May 11, 2010.

Multidisciplinary Artistic Practices as Research

Model Citizen, Here I Stand. Multidisciplinary Performance Exhibition with Crystal Z. Campbell Living Arts, Tulsa, Oklahoma, December 7th, 2018-January 18th, 2019

You are mine. I see now, I'm a have to let you go. Suné Woods, Fred Moten & James Gordon Williams. UCLA Hammer Museum, 2018

You are mine. I see now, I'm a have to let you go. Suné Woods, Fred Moten & James Gordon Williams. Light Work, 2018

Outlaw Culture Music. Syracuse University Community Folk Art Center, 2015

Solo Piano Improvisation for World Premiere of Cauleen Smith's *Crow Requiem.* Everson Museum, 2015

Research Working Groups

Jazz and Culture Writing Group, Central New York Humanities Corridor, 2020-2021

Invited Lectures and Workshops

Music, Peace, and Justice in the Americas: A Tribute to John Burdick, Invited by Gail Bulman, Syracuse University, October 23, 2020 (via Zoom)

Black Lives Matter and Jazz, Invited by Michael Heller, University of Pittsburgh Department of Music, October 22, 2020 (via Zoom)

International Males of Color Empowerment and Retention Conference, Shaw University, October 5-7, 2020 Raleigh, North Carolina,

Critical Sonic Practices Symposium, Invited by Kwami Coleman New York University, Saturday, May 2nd, 2020

The William P. Tolley University Faculty Dinner Forum, Invited by Tolley Professor Ken Frieden, Syracuse University, February 5, 2020

Aretha Franklin Tribute, Invited by Syracuse University Office of Cultural Affairs, Community Folk Art Center at Syracuse University, November 30th, 2018

The Music of Fats Waller Invited by Syracuse Stage in Syracuse, NY, March 15, 2017

Black Political Thought & Social Justice, Invited by Kwame Dixon in the Syracuse University Department of African American Studies in Syracuse, NY, November 12, 2014

Exceptional Musicians-Essential Music 10th Anniversary, Museum of Making Music in Carlsbad, CA, May 14, 2010

Masterclass & Concerto, Sull, Improvvisazione Jazz, PN Bar & Café, in Pordenone, Italy, September 18, 2008

Panelist, The Answer Is Culture: A Roundtable Discussion About Arts, Activism and Cultural Policy, Syracuse University, Apr 3, 2019

Panelist, Prince's Marcus Anderson: Artist and Entrepreneur, Syracuse University Community Folk Art Center, Feb 25, 2019

Panelist, Aretha Franklin Tribute, Syracuse University Community Folk Art Center, November 30, 2018

Session Chair, The Legacy of Samuel Floyd: Church, Soul, Hip-Hop. Society of American Music, University of Kansas, February 17, 2018

Speculations: Science Fiction, Chronopolitics, and Social Change, Invited by Urban Video Project, April 7, 2015

Moderator, *African Rhythms*, Pianist & Composer Randy Weston, Syracuse University, April 16, 2015

Moderator, *Staging Migrations Toward an American West: From Ida B. Wells to Rhodessa*, Marta Effinger-Crichlow, Syracuse University, November 4, 2015

Moderator, *A Global Journey Through the Arts*, Ola Onabulé, Syracuse University, March 22, 2016

Moderator, *Opera and Black Lives Matter: Music & Social Justice*, Composer Anthony Davis, Syracuse University, September 16, 2016

Media Coverage (Selected)

James Gordon Williams, “On Black History: James Gordon Williams, PhD ’13,” February 25, 2021, <http://tritonmag.com/on-black-history-james-gordon-williams-phd-13/>

Dan Bernardi, “James Gordon Williams Recognized For Educational Leadership,” Syracuse University News, April 28, 2020, <https://thecollege.syr.edu/noteworthy/james-gordon-williams-recognized-educational-leadership/>

Renee K. Gadoua, “Purple Reign: Prince’s Commitment to Social Justice Overlooked, James Gordon William Says,” Syracuse University News, February 9, 2018, <https://news.syr.edu/blog/2018/02/09/purple-reign-princes-commitment-to-social-justice-overlooked-james-gordon-william-says/>

Carol Ball, “Pioneering Composer to Speak on ‘Music and Social Justice,’” September 19, 2016, <https://news.syr.edu/blog/2016/09/19/pioneering-composer-to-speak-on-music-and-social-justice-94151/>

Rob Enslin, “Creative Musician James Gordon Williams to Headline Local Events,” April 1, 2015, <https://news.syr.edu/blog/2015/04/01/creative-musician-james-gordon-williams-to-headline-local-events-24096/>

News Staff, “Light Work Presents Suné Woods: ‘To Sleep With Terra,’” August 21, 2017, <https://news.syr.edu/blog/2017/08/21/light-work-presents-sune-woods-to-sleep-with-terra/>

Amy Manley, “Outlaw Culture Music: Williams Makes Faculty Debut with Concert,” November 16, 2015, <https://news.syr.edu/blog/2015/11/16/outlaw-culture-music-williams-makes-faculty-debut-with-concert-16745/>

Peer reviewer

- University Press of Mississippi

Research Supervision

Pan African Studies (PAS)

Tyriana Evans, M.A. Thesis (in progress), "Police Brutality, Black Lives Matter Protest and Counter Protest: Framing in the Mainstream Media and the Effects on Audience Perception"

Amanda Eke, M.A. Thesis "Bidla: The Transnational Influence of American Hip Hop on Ghana," (completed in 2020)

M.A. Thesis Committee Member, Syracuse University

Visual and Performing Arts (VPA)

M.F.A. Thesis Committee Member for Brandon J. Wallace, "Creating The International Sweethearts of Rhythm Graphic Novel," 2020.

Courses at Syracuse University

AAS 400 African American Popular Culture
AAS 409 & 609, History of Jazz 1940-Present
AAS 408 & 608, Masters of Black American Music
AAS 511, Black Political Thought & Music
AAS 206, Introduction to African American Music
AAS 411, The Music and Life of Prince
AAS 112/ANT 112, Introduction to African American Studies, upcoming 2021
CAS 101, First Year Forum

Courses at UC San Diego

ETHN 179B MUS 127B, Jazz Since 1946: Freedom and Form
MUSIC 116, Bjork, Radiohead and Jazz: Two Way Flow of Improvisation
MUS 13AF, Music of Africa
ETHN 176/MUS 154/LTEN 187, Black Texts/ Black Music: Communication and Cultural Expression
MUS 15, Race & Identity in Afropop
95JC, Jazz Band

Courses at Long Beach City College

MUS 40, Music Appreciation (Spring 2014)

Courses at American University

MUS 022 Jazz Studies

Awards, Fellowships & Grants

2020 JV Educational Leadership Award, Shaw University
2018 Syracuse University Humanities Center Faculty Fellowship
2015 Syracuse University Humanities Center Grant (Outlaw Culture Music)
2015 College of Arts & Sciences Co-Curricular Grant, Syracuse University
2014 President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Finalist, University of California
2013 Music Department Dissertation Year Grant, UC San Diego
2013 UC San Diego Music Department Travel Grant
2013 Dissertation Grant, UC San Diego Music Department
2012 UC San Diego Lower Jazz Society Award
2011 Travel Grant to Research Conference in Malmö, Sweden, UC San Diego
2011 Yale Bouchet Conference Best Oral Presentation
2010 Columbia University Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute
2008 UC San Diego Lower Jazz Society Award
2007-2009 San Diego Fellowship, UC San Diego
2006 Independent Music Awards
1997-1999 Graduate Research Assistantship, New York University
1993 Music Scholarship, New England Conservatory of Music
1993 Music Scholarship, Shambrey Chorale
1993 Outstanding Musicianship, International Association of Jazz Educators
1992 Outstanding Musicianship Award, El Camino College
1991 Outstanding Musicianship Award, El Camino College

Service

University-Level (Syracuse University)

Faculty Senate, Syracuse University, 2021-present

Syracuse University Faculty Working Group For Small Discussion Classes During Covid-19, Syracuse University, Summer 2020

Committee Member, PICS: Performing Identities Across Cultures, Spring 2020

College of Art and Sciences

Committee Member, Humanities Council, 2016

Co-Organizer, Harry Allen: Shooting the Enemy, Collaboration with Art & Music Histories (2016)

Co-Organizer, Watson Visiting Professor, Larry Blumenfeld, Spring 2019

Department of African American Studies

Coordinator, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Public Affairs Lecture, Terri Lyne Carrington, Spring 2021

Coordinator, Zoom AAS Awards Ceremony, Spring 2020

Coordinator, African American Studies Colloquium Speaker, Anthony Davis, Fall 2016

Coordinator, John L. Johnson Speakership, Randy Weston, Spring 2015

Coordinator, African American Studies Colloquium, Marta Effinger-Crichlow, Fall 2015

Committee Member, Symposium in Commemoration of 50th Anniversary of Chinua Achebe's Arrow of God Planning Committee, Fall 2014

Committee Member, Undergraduate Studies Committee, 2014-present

University of California, San Diego

Committee Member, International Association for the Study of Popular Music, 2010

Professional Affiliations

International Society for Improvised Music (ISIM), 2017-present

The Society for American Music (SAM), 2014-present

Edward Alexander Bouchet Graduate Honor Society, Yale University, 2012-present