

BLUES AND TRAINS

Albert Murray's *Train Whistle Guitar*

*Guest Lecture by Emily Petermann, M.A.
(Georg-August University of Göttingen)*

This lecture explores how the blues make use of railroad imagery both for its rhythms and for its associations with movement, freedom, place, and a particular social milieu. This complex of blues and trains will be examined within a particular text, Albert Murray's 1975 novel *Train Whistle Guitar*, though other examples of jazz novels in which trains play a significant role (Michael Ondaatje's 1976 *Coming Through Slaughter* and Toni Morrison's 1992 *Jazz*) will also be considered. All of these novels intermedially "translate" elements of music, specifically the blues, into text, and one of the strategies they use to do so is to employ railroad imagery in order to evoke a variety of music that is closely associated with trains and their sounds.

Emily Petermann is an assistant professor of American literature at the Georg-August University of Göttingen. She has completed a dissertation at the University of Konstanz on the musical novel. Her published articles have focused on literature and the other arts and she is currently co-editing a volume of essays on Time and Space in Words and Music.

WED, JANUARY 25, 2012
2:40pm – 4:10pm, ROOM 331

Organized by Dr. des. Florian Freitag

Texts are available in Room 247

Kindly supported by the Freundeskreis FTSK Germersheim e.V.

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und Kulturwissenschaft
in Germersheim



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