

Special Issue

Music and the Written Word

Message from the Guest Editor

Words and song have long been thought to spring from the same expressive impulse. In *Disgrace*, JM Coetzee writes that "the origins of speech lie in song, and the origins of song in the need to fill out with sound the overlarge and rather empty human soul". But what happens when the spoken word becomes text? To what extent can written language behave as though it were a type of music—or music act as a language? This Special Issue will explore the many ways in which music and literature may be linked: music as a theme and a motif in fiction; rhetorical links between music and language in literary texts; the musician as author and the author as musician. Some questions which might be addressed include:

- What is the nature of the challenge faced by a composer setting a literary text to music, and what makes a song succeed?
- What is lost, and what is found, when a literary work is transformed into an opera?
- Can instrumental music tell a story, or move beyond mimesis of extra-musical sounds to convey abstract ideas?
- What are the limits of writing about music? How can words convey music's effect and its affect?

Guest Editor

Dr. Gillian Dooley

College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Flinders University,
Adelaide 5000, Australia

Deadline for manuscript submissions

closed (31 March 2025)



Humanities

an Open Access Journal
by MDPI

Impact Factor 0.3
CiteScore 0.5



mdpi.com/si/181416

Humanities
Editorial Office
MDPI, Grosspeteranlage 5
4052 Basel, Switzerland
Tel: +41 61 683 77 34
humanities@mdpi.com

[mdpi.com/journal/
humanities](https://mdpi.com/journal/humanities)





Humanities

an Open Access Journal
by MDPI

Impact Factor 0.3
CiteScore 0.5



[mdpi.com/journal/
humanities](https://mdpi.com/journal/humanities)



About the Journal

Message from the Editor-in-Chief

We welcome contributions that address fundamental issues in the Humanities from any meaningful perspective, combining past and present concerns in order to blaze a path toward the future. Interdisciplinary approaches are particularly welcome. All submissions will be critically reviewed by peers, aiming for the highest possible scholarly level. Being an online journal, the published papers will reach their desired audiences faster, more reliably, and much more easily than traditional print versions, while upholding the same, if not even higher, scholarly standards.

Editor-in-Chief

Prof. Dr. Albrecht Classen

Department of German Studies, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
85721, USA

Author Benefits

High Visibility:

indexed within Scopus, ESCI (Web of Science), ERIH Plus, and other databases.

Rapid Publication:

manuscripts are peer-reviewed and a first decision is provided to authors approximately 33.4 days after submission; acceptance to publication is undertaken in 4.6 days (median values for papers published in this journal in the second half of 2025).

Recognition of Reviewers:

reviewers who provide timely, thorough peer-review reports receive vouchers entitling them to a discount on the APC of their next publication in any MDPI journal, in appreciation of the work done.