

OXFORD AMERICAN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: **Kelsey White** kwhite@oxfordamerican.org 501-374-0000

Oxford American Announces 2023 Music Issue Theme: Ballads

The 25th annual music issue and CD will celebrate ballads as a vessel for Southern storytelling and sentimentality.

July 25, 2023—CONWAY, AR—The Oxford American is thrilled to announce that our 25th annual Southern Music Issue will be devoted to ballads of all genres and origins. We will investigate the slow-building progression from hyperlocal story songs to contemporary slow jams, while simultaneously celebrating myriad stylistic iterations in between: Appalachian folk, character-driven blues, tear-jerking country, down-tempo Southern rock, and more.

By committing to this prismatic approach, we will ask questions that invite contradictory answers, crossing state and genre lines in pursuit of something sincere: What makes a ballad a ballad, exactly? What can the term's nebulous resilience teach us about how sounds and stories are transmitted? Will ballads go on forever, and will we always love them?

In our pages, contributors will explore what ballads reveal about the past, present, and future of Southern storytelling through personal essays, profiles, visual art, experimental narratives, short stories, and more, offering fresh takes on the songs that make private feelings public, tug our heartstrings, and soundtrack our slow dances.

Published since 1997, the Music Issue is the *Oxford American's* most acclaimed and popular edition.

From 2009 until 2015, and from 2017-2019, the *OA's* Music Issue featured a different Southern state each year. In 2016, we departed from the states to examine "Visions of the Blues." In 2020, GRAMMY-winning musician Brittany Howard selected her favorite music issue pieces of all time for our Greatest Hits issue. Then in 2021, our magazine focused on the Southern influence of American music beyond our region's borders, reimagining these far-flung locales as Up South. In 2022, we celebrated the radiant essence of "countrified" sound.

The Ballads Issue will include a free companion CD and a selection of specially curated Spotify playlists. Stay tuned for more information about these exclusive supplements to the issue!

The 2023 Southern Music Issue is available now for pre-order at OxfordAmericanGoods.org. It will be on select newsstands on December 5, 2023. Or, subscribe to the *Oxford American* by visiting OxfordAmerican.org/subscribe. For bulk orders, contact info@oxfordamerican.org or 501-374-0000.

Want to learn more about the Ballads Issue? Contact our editorial team for an interview at info@oxfordamerican.org.