

OXFORD AMERICAN

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Oxford American presents the Memphis Music Issue (Al Green, Julien Baker, Elvis)

Our first city-centric issue focuses on the artists and sounds of Memphis, Tennessee. An exceptional lineup of contributors celebrate the Bluff City as the unofficial capital of the Delta, where American sounds and stories flow between the riverbanks of time. Forgotten Memphis melodies will resurface, beloved icons mingle with lesser-known trailblazers, and distinctly Memphian spaces come to life through reported essays, profiles, personal narratives, visual art, fiction, and more. On newsstands December 10.

November 7, 2024—CONWAY, AR—The *Oxford American's* 26th annual Music Issue is the first to center on a Southern city—**Memphis, Tennessee**. Experience the thrill of the Memphis music scene—past and present—through great writing and an exceptional playlist. The listening experience is paired with liner notes on each track, allowing readers to journey through every song.



The Memphis edition is supplemented by a playlist of beloved Memphis hits and deep cuts, available through an included digital download card, as well as on an optional **limited-edition vinyl LP** add-on. The LP features sixteen carefully curated tracks that celebrate the depth and variety of Memphis sounds. Subscribers will be the first to receive their issues and discover the closely held secrets of the playlist. It features previously unreleased tracks, well-known artists, and new sounds that listeners will fall in love with.

“Nashville is where you go to make a hit that sounds like everyone. Memphis is where you make a hit that sounds like no one else,” writes contributor **Robert Gordon** in his essay about the Memphis jukebox industry.

Al Green is this year’s cover artist. The dynamic photograph of Green was taken by renowned music photographer **Eric Johnson**, who *Vanity Fair* credited with being responsible for “some of the most memorable music imagery of the last few decades.” Johnson’s black-and-white portrait of Green radiates with the fierce individuality and Memphis-specific charisma that this special edition celebrates. It’s at once glamorous and naturalistic, both soulful and a little bit punk.

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The wealth of sounds and artists that have emerged from Memphis are explored throughout the issue:

- **Elena Passarello** takes a contrarian approach to the King’s catalog, considering a wildly famous bootleg of “shitty” **Elvis** songs.
- **Zandria F. Robinson** exalts Memphis rapper **GloRilla**’s “new blues woman gospel epistemology.”
- The story of *Happy Hour*, an unreleased collaboration between **Jazze Pha** and **Cee-Lo Green**, is told by **Michael A. Gonzales**.
- **Andria Lisle** profiles her late friend, singer-songwriter Jimmy Lee Lindsey Jr., known as **Jay Reatard**, a luminary of the Memphis garage-punk scene.
- Award-winning musicologist **Robert F. Darden** details how Memphis and the Church of God in Christ form the roots of gospel singing’s emotional and supernatural core.
- **William Skeaping** is in conversation with the godfather of Memphis rap, **DJ Spanish Fly**, accompanied by archival images of the city’s hip-hop scene.
- Memphis historian and filmmaker **Robert Gordon** writes about jukeboxes—“the overlooked engines of the early record business.”
- And much, much more.

“This isn’t a comprehensive take on Memphis. It’s a celebration of the music you may not know with some fresh takes on the music you do,” said Editor-in-Chief **Sara A. Lewis**. “Our favorite part of making our Music Issue every year is discovery—whether it’s a deep cut from a beloved artist or unearthing an obscure track. We want you to have as much fun listening and reading along to this issue as we did making it.”

The Oxford American will launch the issue with a listening party at **Stax Museum of American Soul Music** in Memphis on **December 4**. Details to come.

The 2024 Southern Music Issue, with an optional vinyl LP add-on, is available now for pre-order at OxfordAmericanGoods.org. Subscriber copies mail on November 25, 2024. Find the issue at select newsstands on December 10, 2024.

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ABOUT THE OXFORD AMERICAN’S ANNUAL MUSIC ISSUE

Published since 1997, the annual music issue is the Oxford American’s most acclaimed and popular production. Since 2009, the music issue has centered on a different theme, including Southern states, Visions of the Blues, Country Roots, and Ballads. We are proud to continue this twenty-six year tradition with another historic issue.