



# Imagine the Sound

*Experimental African American Literature  
after Civil Rights*

CARTER MATHES

**Examines the use of sound in the works of African American writers during the post–Civil Rights era**

Carter Mathes is associate professor of English at Rutgers University.

In *Imagine the Sound*, Carter Mathes demonstrates how African American writers used sound to further artistic resistance within a rapidly transforming political and racial landscape.

Situating literary works by Henry Dumas, Larry Neal, and Toni Cade Bambara in relation to the expansive ideas of sound proposed by free jazz musicians such as Marion Brown and Sun Ra, this book illustrates how the presence of sound can be read as political and recuperates critically neglected, yet important, writers and musicians.

In precise and elegant prose, Mathes shows how in conceptualizing sound, African American writers opened up the political imaginations of their readers. By exploring this intellectual convergence of literary artistry, experimental music, and sound theory, *Imagine the Sound* reveals how taking up radically new forms of expression allows us to speak to the complexities of race and political resistance.

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“With extraordinary sensitivity, Carter Mathes explores the ways that sound plays a crucial role in African American literature as a means of indexing a space of thought. *Imagine the Sound* takes its place among the best recent scholarship, teaching us what it means to read in the wake of the Black Arts Movement.”  
—Brent Hayes Edwards, author of *The Practice of Diaspora*

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