

## Sound Expertise Season 3.6 -

### Retelling Beethoven's Story with Laura Tunbridge

Transcribed by Andrew Dell'Antonio

**Laura Tunbridge** 00:00

Nobody needs to make a case for Beethoven, on a certain level, because there are so many biographies and because he has a fairly secure place in the canon of music history. So what is it about this man, and the way that he worked, that has become so iconic of a certain branch of music? And why do we value him in the way that we do? And what relationship does that have to the historical sources?

[music] 00:27

**Will Robin** 00:47

Welcome back to Sound Expertise. I'm Will Robin, and this is a podcast where I talk to my fellow music scholars about their research and why it matters. "DNA from Beethoven's Hair Unlocks Medical and Family Secrets." We all remember those headlines back in March, right? Something about testing Beethoven's DNA, something about how he died, something about diarrhea. That was kind of my takeaway, because I couldn't really bring myself to finish any of the articles I started reading. Despite the fact that I love Beethoven — really! He's my favorite composer ever, and I teach his music all the time — every article I've ever read about the DNA, or medical history, or psychological profiling of a famous composer just leaves me profoundly bored. I'm not alone in this in my field. A lot of musicologists think that these kinds of centuries-later medical diagnoses don't really tell us much we didn't already know, and are often steeped in mythologies that we in our profession have been trying to debunk for decades. Which begs an important question, is there anything new we *can* learn about Beethoven? And that we can — or at least I can — care about? I have found myself very surprised to be answering with a resounding yes. Because of one book, *Beethoven: A Life in Nine Pieces*, by Laura Tunbridge, professor of music at University of Oxford. I was actually shocked about how much I learned about Beethoven from this 2020 biography, and I think everyone should read it. But before you do, listen to my conversation with Dr. Tunbridge, in which we talk about Beethoven and just importantly, how she came to find a genuinely fresh perspective on his life and times.

[music] 02:35

**Will Robin** 02:45

I've been thinking a lot about the Beethoven biographies I've read and other composer biographies I've read, and why your book seemed like such a breath of fresh air in comparison. And I want to talk a little bit today about some of the decisions you made that hopefully made that what it is. The first of which has to do with the very, very beginning of the book, where you include a short note on Beethoven's

finances. And you talk about the cost of living in Vienna versus cost of living today, what a cup of coffee would have costed Beethoven's time. And I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about why you thought it was important for a reader of a Beethoven's biography to understand that aspect of the composers life before you talk about everything else.

**Laura Tunbridge 03:34**

I think writing it what became clear is that trying to contextualize it in terms of the every day was really helpful. Because so often with composer biographies, and particularly with Beethoven, I think there's the whole narrative about the lone genius and otherworldliness. And looking through the letters and notebooks and other paraphernalia around his life, you realize how much actually just the business of living was significant. And then, I was actually asked by the editor of the book to explain the thing about historical currencies, because quite often I found I was saying, this cost so much, and trying to put it in some kind of context, which is always really difficult to do. And I thought, actually, if you talk about goods that you buy regularly, it's a more straightforward way maybe, or maybe a more understandable way to think about the kinds of things that matter to people. So rather than big luxury items, something that's a sort of fairly everyday purchase is something that helps give a glimpse both into the cost of living but also, what were Beethoven's priorities. So hopefully, that spoke across time a little bit more easily than some of the more abstract currency conversions,

**Will Robin 04:59**

Right. The word everyday is not I think one I wrote down, but that totally encapsulates why I love this book, it was dealing with the everyday. So what were Beethoven's coffee habits, just so the listener who maybe hasn't read the book yet can get a sense of that, because I found that fascinating too.

**Laura Tunbridge 05:20**

Yeah, it's funny. How many people have responded to that as an insightful debate in his life?

**Will Robin 05:25**

That's a relatable point. I mean, it's hard to relate to writing nine brilliant symphonies. But most of us drink coffee.

**Laura Tunbridge 05:32**

Yes, that's true. So I think there was a regular routine of his breakfast and grinding 60 coffee beans, to produce a coffee for him in the morning. And it was something that actually was really important. He had to make sure that he had the right kind of coffee machine for him. And he was, actually, surprisingly into his gadgets, I think. So making sure he had the right kind of coffee pot and sourcing these beans was an important part of his routine. I think that's probably all I would say about it. It's really fascinating, you can find out from the conversation books what he was buying regularly, in terms of his food, and Beethoven's diet is something that maybe we don't want to reproduce, historically speaking, but it's quite interesting to see.

**Will Robin 06:22**

I want to circle back to that one, because of the whole DNA thing. And I'm curious for your take on that, which has been in the news just in this last week. But the money aspect of the book was really striking

to me, also in terms of — you gave such a clear sense of Beethoven's canniness around being a composer in the marketplace and, and his ambition in terms of — not the ambition of: I want to write a powerful symphony that's about the unity of brotherhood of man, but his ambition in terms of figuring out a way to get his music performed and get people on his side. Can you talk a little bit about how Beethoven made his money and how that changed throughout his career and how he was conscientious about that?

**Laura Tunbridge** 07:12

He comes from a significant — if I say turning point that might be too strong a word, but the sense that rather than gaining steady employment in a court or chapel, Beethoven is having to make a living out of teaching, performing, and eventually composing. With all of the problems of trying to make money out of composition, which is still around today, in the sense of you have to first of all find the people who are willing to sponsor you to compose — the subscriptions for his scores was something that he was using from his Opus 1 onwards — and then getting repeat performances of things through arrangements, transcriptions. And you can see throughout his career that he's always balancing that desire to get performances, good performances done, but also using the publishing industry, and trying to establish some kind of copyrights or at least control over who had access to the scores and who would pay him what for the scores. And then he's in an unusual situation, and maybe not exclusively so, but it's quite unusual amongst composers, in having these aristocrats who are willing to give him a yearly stipend. And that gives him a certain amount of freedom, almost from when he arrives in Vienna, and then famously in 1809. But the precarity of that is also apparent, because although the princes and Archbishop Rudolph get together and offer him this annuity, he finds that the financial situation in Vienna is so volatile, or they don't pay, that although he has this promises of a steady income, it doesn't necessarily materialize. But you have, on the one hand, this promise of financial security, but you also have all of the things that the Napoleonic Wars did to undermine that, the hyperinflation or simply patrons not paying up when it comes time. And so we tend to think of the music coming out of nowhere, and out of the pure joy of creating, but actually the mechanics of having to support himself and support his family become ever pressing through the decades. And he was very litigious and took people who either had promised him money — or indeed his family — to court. And while he retreated from society, he was never particularly parsimonious in terms of his living.

**Will Robin** 10:05

The detail that I have always in the back of my head is the stipend that provides such a context for Beethoven being able to remove himself from the world and compose whatever he composed. And that's something — when I teach Beethoven, I always say, this is an interesting thing that composers hadn't had before. I really just hadn't thought about the fact that he was actually essentially having to continue to hustle just to get the money that was owed to him, or that was promised him, that was really fascinating.

**Laura Tunbridge** 10:34

Yeah, and if you know that, then that does put a very different spin on thinking about his reputation, but also how dependent he was on other people. Also, to make his case for him, all of the secretaries, his brothers, constantly either trying to sell scores abroad, or get money that was due, means that, yes,

always hustling and always concerned about money. There was never a point, I think, when he could be comfortable about it.

**Will Robin** 11:02

I want to come back to this — The way that you layer in him and other people, I found so enriching to really understand Beethoven in relation. But maybe to back up a bit: I learned a lot of new things about Beethoven in this book. And I don't necessarily usually think of Beethoven being a subject that I can learn new things about, and similarly, I also don't think of there being new things to say about Beethoven, beyond “we discovered a new manuscript,” or “we tested his hair for DNA,” or whatever. So how did you come to want to write a Beethoven book? Presumably, maybe also given that you might have felt, how could I say something new about Beethoven? And maybe you didn't feel that way? I don't know.

**Laura Tunbridge** 11:57

If I'm honest, I never imagined I would write a book about Beethoven. I'm not a Beethoven scholar as such. That wasn't what my PhD was about, I'm not in that world. And so I was asked if I would write a Beethoven book for the centenary, or the anniversary celebrations. And it struck me as an interesting thing to think about, in terms of what Beethoven biographies were around, and what they did or didn't do, and also how I felt as a teacher, and as a musicologist, for whom Beethoven is in some ways ever present. But quite often, you're using him as a point of reference, maybe as a straw man, as the person who's held up as the model of the great composer, and constantly thinking about ways that come to pass, both in terms of how Beethoven's reputation has been built up, but also what you know, or what I had realized from looking at other composers and other performance situations about where Beethoven fit in that. So I was able to use that slightly askew position to think about where Beethoven sits in music histories, perhaps more broadly, and that for me was a useful way in to thinking about okay, so what do we need to know? And what don't we realize and what puts him in context, that might cast a fresh light on some of the things that get repeated and repeated about Beethoven? Because once you read several of the biographies, you realize that things are being asserted over and over again, almost without criticizing them, and then sometimes just adding in a little bit of other historical context, can make it seem or make it read very differently.

**Will Robin** 14:02

What are some of those things that were repeated, that you found, if you went back, you could tell a different story or find a different piece of reference?

**Laura Tunbridge** 14:12

Some of the things about performance history, programming and where Beethoven fit in that. Some of the things about patronage and copyright. Work by people like Nick Mathew's, say, about the economics of the late 18th century, early 19th century, that encourage you to think about the political and cultural and social world of Beethoven differently, was helpful. And so those angles helped me find ways in, and then a frustration with the obsession with late style, obsession with the Immortal Beloved, and an interest that I have more broadly about how when historical documents are encountered changes the way in which they read. So realizing that things like the Heiligenstadt Testament was discovered posthumously was actually something that, yes, people talk about, but they don't actually

think about. So that meant that people didn't necessarily have that to hand to understand Beethoven's place in the world during his lifetime. And it meant that people could then recast — I'm not saying this is a desperately original perspective on Beethoven, but it was those kinds of things where you could begin to find ways into telling a slightly different story by playing with the historical aspect of what people knew about Beethoven when. I've got a bigger interest in reception history, I think that probably encouraged me to think about it slightly differently.

**Will Robin** 15:56

So treating Beethoven's early life and reception not as if his later music was inevitable in some way, but looking at what his public perception was in 1802 or 1803 versus 1815, or something like that?

**Laura Tunbridge** 16:13

Yeah, precisely. I mean, I think it's very difficult for us to not read lives backwards, we know where composers end up. And that becomes the defining feature. And I think, especially with Beethoven, it's interesting. Now looking at what gets programmed, what gets played, the pieces that are held up, for the most part is a very selective canon of works. And wondering what that tells us about the ways in which we want to think about Beethoven's music or the pieces that speak to us now, was another way in which you can begin to peel away some of those layers.

**Will Robin** 16:49

Your first chapter is about the septet, which is not a part of the canon of Beethoven's music, I would say, that's widely performed — unless you're a wind player — a lot. How is that an example of what you're trying to do in this case?

**Laura Tunbridge** 17:06

As an example, in that it was Beethoven's most successful piece during his lifetime. So it gets performed...

**Will Robin** 17:15

During his entire lifetime? I don't think I realized that. Wow.

**Laura Tunbridge** 17:20

Pretty much, to the extent where later in his life, he's saying, "I don't want to hear that piece anymore. I'm so sick of it." And in the concerts of the 1820s, when Schuppanzigh returns to Vienna, he's still programming this septet, and it's still popular. So this large scale chamber work is something that people know as a tuneful representation of Beethoven's output. For us today, it seems like an unusual combination of instruments, an unusual piece, and not really very Beethovenian in some ways. But in terms of what popular audiences — or whatever popular audience means — in terms of what was heard in concert, that was one of the pieces that he made his reputation with, and it stayed with him. So that provides a sense of both what the Viennese public were interested in, and what was successful in his time. And then however Beethoven was considered innovative, and radical, and those might be the things that we prize now, it wasn't necessarily what was prized then.

**Will Robin** 18:30

Right, if this is the piece that's the most performed rather than the Hammerklavier or the fifth symphony, that says a lot about what people thought who Beethoven was, right?

**Laura Tunbridge 18:41**

Yeah. But who Beethoven was, it puts him in the context of a lot of other composers. And in terms of genre, it's also quite enlightening to think about, actually, what kind of music were people performing, what kind of things got put into arrangements that people could hear? And also, how much of this music was never actually being experienced live in high class performances in the same way as we experience it now? The whole thing about how things are rehearsed and published has changed so significantly, that those angles are helpful.

**Will Robin 19:16**

I'm now thinking about, what would it be if I had a slide about Beethoven, and instead of saying, his three main genres were piano sonata, string quartet, symphony, I said, "the piece you need to know is the septet." That's so just fundamentally different from what we think about.

**Laura Tunbridge 19:29**

Yeah. And of course, it's by no means the only piece that — he writes in lots of different ways and different styles and some other pieces subsequently are popular or respected, or whatever else. But if that's the piece that, in part, establishes him as a mature composer in Vienna, and that's the starting point, that's very different from saying, we need to look at the sonatas, the string quartets, more than those kinds of pieces — we need to think about these things side by side.

**Will Robin 19:59**

Yeah. So you get this commission for this book for the anniversary year. What does the actual process look like for you? Do you start with the existing Beethoven scholarship? Do you start looking in the letters or the correspondence or the reception? How do you move through all of this insane amount of material to read and to analyze?

**Laura Tunbridge 20:27**

I was selective. I had to be and actually, one thing that was helpful was thinking, I'm not going to... there is no need for another big, hugely long...

**Will Robin 20:40**

Did you know from the beginning it was going to be a short book — or short-ish, I should say?

**Laura Tunbridge 20:43**

Shortish book? Yes, I did. And I knew that it was for a general audience. And I knew that there were lots of long biographies of Beethoven and some very short biographies of Beethoven and something in between, that brought in more recent academic scholarship, and that didn't try to cover the whole life was what I was interested in trying to do. So I haven't dealt particularly with Beethoven's childhood, say, but decided to start essentially in 1800, and then thinking, what are the things in Beethoven's life and works and reception that are significant? And can I tell this story through a selection of works? And so then the process was thinking about, okay, how do I represent a variety of genres? Because there

are already books on Beethoven's nine symphonies, what other music did he perform? And also, why do we have such a particular canon of works from Beethoven? And why don't we think about other genres, so precisely the septet comes into that, the choral fantasy would be another work. I wanted to include some song because I have a long standing interest in song. And on from there, so I knew I needed to have some very famous pieces, I have the Eroica symphony in there. But I was also asking myself questions like, What happens if you don't have a chapter on the ninth symphony? And what does that open up in terms of what you can do, historically speaking, with Beethoven's life and works. So that was the process, it was partly a practical element of thinking, I don't have that much space. And I don't have that much time to write a huge completist work. And they already exist in various forms. But to do something that allows people to find a way into thinking about Beethoven maybe slightly differently. And introduces a range of pieces as well, because I wanted as best I could, to encourage people to want to listen to the music, as well as do all the kinds of social cultural history.

**Will Robin** 22:59

So that structure of having essentially, nine chapters, each chapter is about a piece and a theme that touches on various aspects of his life was something you developed fairly early on, it sounds like?

**Laura Tunbridge** 23:12

Yeah, and then that became an easier way to marshal my material.

**Will Robin** 23:18

Interesting. You just explained the septet, but something like the Choral Fantasy instead of Beethoven's Ninth — It's such a clear example of you're poking the bear, almost — you're really putting your thumb on the scale of, choosing a piece that's not one of the canonic ones and almost substituting ..., beyond the desire to reorient away from that thing, how did you end up choosing the pieces you chose?

**Laura Tunbridge** 23:52

For a variety of reasons. So beyond the kind of endemic contrariness, I think there was a sense — actually, I've always been interested in the Choral Fantasy, having played it a very, very long time ago. So it was a piece of that I've...

**Will Robin** 24:08

I also weirdly love that piece.

**Laura Tunbridge** 24:09

And so it's something — why don't we talk about that piece more. If I don't want to talk about the Ninth Symphony directly — it's in there, but it doesn't have a chapter dedicated to it — then, is that a way to begin to think about why that piece is more famous than others? If I was talking about the quartets, which example can I give that can be written about easily without recourse to a lot of technical language? Because that was the other thing that I couldn't do in this book. With it being for a general audience, it could talk about the music but obviously doesn't go into it in a level of detail that a more academic book might. And what are the stories that are attached to pieces that are interesting to explore? So there was that sort of thematic element of it. What are the tales that these works tell, was something that I was keeping an eye out for, as well. So it was partly judged by the pieces that I like

and find interesting. Some things where you think actually, this gives a particular angle, or the thing very obviously ties in with that piece. So those are the kinds of things I had in mind.

**Will Robin 25:29**

You mentioned having these moments that are kind of extremely well trodden in Beethoven biographies like the Immortal Beloved, how did you navigate these mythologically controversial subjects, the dedication of the Eroica Symphony, the Immortal Beloved, how did you begin to approach them? And how did you ultimately end up making them a part of the book?

**Laura Tunbridge 25:58**

The Immortal Beloved I struggled with, to be honest, because I didn't really want to get into it. And I thought, yes, everybody is fascinated by Beethoven's love life or frustrations with his love life. But we don't know who it is. And I don't have a great theory about who it is. And am I allowed to say, I don't know. Maybe even I don't particularly care. I mean, it tells you something about Beethoven's situation that he never got married. And there are various reasons we can think about why that might be. And obviously, his romantic relationships mattered in lots of ways. But does it necessarily need to connect to the pieces that he composed? And what does it tell us about the way that he composed, if anything? But then having a back and forth again, with the editor who said No, You have to go and you have to actually explain what the whole issue is with the Immortal Beloved, and who it might have been, and what the various options are. And so then trying to find a way of weaving in ideas about love and romance from the early 19th century, that you might find in poetry, you might find in song, and you might also find in an artist biography, with the kinds of things that I wanted to do rather than weigh in on, I think, whichever of Beethoven's piano students may or may not have been the recipient of this letter that he never sent. On the other hand, it's really fascinating. If you read into the research on say, the timing that people have looked at to find out when this letter might have been written. And if that's the case, what the Postal Service did to help determine when Beethoven was writing this particular person and who it probably then was, so you can see the whole apparatus of musicological scholarship going into overdrive to try and find the facts of this. But you also realize that, as far as films and novels are concerned, it doesn't really matter what the facts are, they're just going to repeat and go for the character that is more appealing.

**Will Robin 28:18**

You mentioned you're someone who deals with reception history. And it seems there's sometimes, I think, a divide between reception focused musicologists and more traditional biographers in terms of how you're thinking about the subject. How much were you thinking about or trying to understand in the subject of writing what is a biography, Beethoven, as a person, thinking about trying to empathize with him, or feel that kinship rather than the mythology that can place the distance between us and him?

**Laura Tunbridge 28:58**

It's a tricky thing to negotiate. And actually, one that having thought that I wouldn't necessarily write a biography myself, that I was more likely to write about how biographies are written about the whole historiography.



**Will Robin 29:12**

Yeah, you're making yourself the subject in a way of the reception history you're used to doing.

**Laura Tunbridge 29:18**

Yes. So apart from an acute self consciousness about that (Will laughs), I think it might have helped me take a little bit of a critical distance to it and feel as if I can... Nobody needs to make a case for Beethoven on a certain level because there are so many biographies and because he has a fairly secure place in the canon of music history. So what is it about this man, and the way that he worked, that has become so iconic of a certain branch of music? And why do we value him in the way that we do, and what relationship does that have to the historical sources? And that was liberating for me to think, well, I don't have to cover everything. If I find that facets of this allow me to have some kind of insight into daily life or relationships or the importance of the people around him, and actually how all of that contributes to the way that he worked, then that makes him a bit more approachable. I'm not sure that's necessarily what you want from your composer, but I was kind of interested in it as a exercise in terms of thinking, what do you do, for example, about Beethoven's sense of humor, which is pretty crude, and he makes bad puns and all of that,

**Will Robin 30:59**

We'll he seems like an asshole with it, like he's calling his friends fat, and it doesn't seem nice. But you also have to understand that in its time, I guess, I don't know.

**Laura Tunbridge 31:07**

You can say yes, it's all part of the time. But you can also say, Yes, he wasn't necessarily somebody I particularly want to meet. That's okay. And he fell out with people and said horrible things to people, but also made up with them. And sometimes he could obviously be very generous. And I don't know how you feel about it, whether you actually want to meet some of the people you work on.

**Will Robin 31:37**

I've met them all. I work on living composers. (Laughs) Some of them I wish I hadn't met!

**Laura Tunbridge 31:44**

How helpful is it actually? What insights does it give you? And it can ... you think of them in a very different way because of it, and it can be a very, very small thing.

**Will Robin 31:55**

Yeah, that's fascinating. What would you say are the biggest things that you discovered or learned about Beethoven in the course of this book, that you didn't know before, or you hadn't thought of before?

**Laura Tunbridge 32:11**

The business side of it I hadn't thought of as much. Although I was aware that he wrote in a range of genres, I think the chronology of that, and knowing that things like the folk song arrangements are up against the late piano sonatas. And how, in some ways, engaged he was with things like new technologies, be those ear trumpets, or musical instruments, or metronomes. That side of Beethoven's

career and his interests in some ways, I found fascinating. And then also, frankly, the opportunity to listen to a lot more music. I knew a fair amount of Beethoven already. But it does encourage you to think about the music and to listen to it in slightly different ways when you're thinking about it in the context of his career, for me, rather than thinking about how his pieces are either much analyzed or have been influential on others. So that side of things I found fascinating.

**Will Robin** 33:23

So we're speaking a few days after this spate of news about Beethoven's DNA getting tested via his hair, which — I couldn't bring myself to finish any of the articles that I started reading about it, sort of those things that I find kind of annoying when it becomes a new story. Maybe you've already gotten press calls about this and had to give your spiel, but — is that the kind of thing that you care about at this point? Or is this one of these things where — I think a lot of musicologists throw up their hands about anything involving when they look at the skull, or when they look at the hair, when they come up with some new psychoanalytic theory or whatever.

**Laura Tunbridge** 34:05

The big question is actually what it means for any insight into the position of Beethoven in musical life or how he interpreted his music, or indeed his life. One thing that tickles me about it is that only — was it five of the eight samples were found to be actually Beethoven's ... or from the same person, so most likely to be Beethoven. So the whole paraphernalia of — these are the locks of Beethoven's hair actually proving to not be the case at all. But what's going to happen to those — do you take them out of the museum cases and say, Actually, no, this was once thought to belong to Beethoven. And whether we need to know what ... How helpful is it to know that Beethoven died of a certain illness, and maybe an illness that could have been cured today or at least helped today. It helps us maybe imagine what his symptoms were. It could be immensely frustrating. It feeds into those discussions about, say, his deafness, and for all of the times where you give a talk and somebody asks whether Beethoven would have composed differently, had he not been deaf. It doesn't answer any of those questions. So the science of it, and the point that this history isn't so very far away. And it's quite hard for us to find new things to discover. So we latch on to those things with enthusiasm. And we can prove something but I'm not quite sure what is proved. And it does feed into the narratives. But I have to say, working on this, and then you write books where you think, Oh, this will maybe put things in context. And perhaps people will think about Beethoven differently. And they do up to a point, but then you realize that precisely the same stories come around again and again and again.

**Will Robin** 36:18

Futile.

**Laura Tunbridge** 36:20

Yes. On a certain level. So It's interesting to see how much press interest there is in it. And what it eventually tells us about Beethoven's life and works, I'm not so sure about.

**Will Robin** 36:32

Yeah. Well, hopefully, folks who read one of those stories will also read your book.

**Laura Tunbridge** 36:37

Well, who knows. (Laughs)

**Will Robin** 36:39

Well, thank you so much for speaking with me. This was really helpful and I hope folks continue to read your great book.

**Laura Tunbridge** 36:45

Oh, thank you very much.

[music] 36:47

**Will Robin** 36:54

Thank you to Laura Tunbridge for that great conversation. You can read more of her work over on our website, [soundexpertise.org](http://soundexpertise.org). And many thanks to those who have written in to tell us why they listen to the show. I wanted to acknowledge two emails today. Brent Wetters, a musicologist in Rhode Island, wrote in to say he's been listening to the podcast since the beginning during his commute. He writes, "you may be interested to hear that your podcast has been immensely helpful to my teaching. I'm always looking for ways to bring diverse perspectives into the class. And I've shamelessly poached researchers I heard on your podcast to give guest lectures." That is super cool. Thank you, Brent. And we got a really lovely email from Justin Williams, a musicologist at the University of Bristol, who writes that sound expertise "has kept me in touch with some of the more recent debates from afar, discussions and work being done in US academia in particular. Being based in the UK and with two small children, it is harder and harder to get over to US conferences. And so I enjoy being a fly on the wall to these conversations. In a very nerdy way, I look forward to Tuesday mornings when a new episode drops and it accompanies me on my walk to work." That's really gratifying to hear. It's been so great to find out how sound expertise is working for different folks and how you listen. And it's not too late to write in — our inbox is still open feel free to email us — [soundexpertise00 at gmail](mailto:soundexpertise00@gmail.com), introduce yourselves, ask any questions you have, say whatever you'd like. As always, many thanks to D Edward Davis for his production work, you can check out his music on SoundCloud at [warmsilence](https://www.soundcloud.com/warmsilence). I'm grateful to Andrew Dell'Antonio for transcribing our episodes to make them more accessible. This episode of sound expertise was recorded at the National Foreign Language Center with support from University of Maryland's School of Music. Next week on sound expertise, the philosophy of vibes.

**Unidentified Speaker** 38:46

So what I'm arguing then is that so vibe gets presented as more progressive than things like genre or gender. But what it's doing is it's just reconfiguring the way we categorize people and categorize music to be compatible with the way algorithms organize us.

**Will Robin** 39:01

See you then.

[music]