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NPR'S TINY DESK CONCERT SERIES: VOCALITIES OF OUTRAGE AND ACTS OF GAIETY

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NPR'S TINY DESK: VOCALITIES OF OUTRAGE AND ACTS OF GAIETY

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The Tiny Desk concert series features live video-recorded performances of artists at the desk of NPR Music’s Bob Boilen, the series’ main host. This thesis interrogates NPR Music’s values and the ways artists both manifest and queer those ideals in performance. I argue, in light of the 2016 election, performers challenge NPR Music’s taste system through two modes of subversion. The first mode considers vocalities of outrage specifically in the performances of Saul Williams and the Drive-By Truckers. These performers shift their social positions in expressions of outrage through vocality—as the embodied materiality of the voice and its constructed meanings (Freya Jarman-Ivens, 2011). The second mode considers acts of gaiety (Sara Warner, 2012), which sustain struggles for social change. These musical acts are shown in the performances of Common and Troker, who use moments of unexpected release to further engage their audience.