Transcript on “Sensational Sounds: Steph Ceraso on Sonic Composition & Pedagogy”

Transcribed by Eric Detweiler

[*Rhetoricity* theme song plays]  
  
Detweiler [voiceover]: This is Eric Detweiler, and I’m here to herald the return of *Rhetoricity*. Hope you’re ready to listen up, out, through, and around, because this time I’m bringing to you an interview with Steph Ceraso. Dr. Ceraso is currently an assistant professor at the University of Maryland–Baltimore County. Starting in fall 2016, though, she’ll be taking a position as Assistant Professor of Digital Writing and Rhetoric in the Department of English at the University of Virginia.  
  
Dr. Ceraso contributed the entry on “Sound” to the Modern Language Association’s “Keywords in Digital Pedagogy” project, and she presented as part of a panel entitled “Writing with Sound” at the 2016 MLA convention. She’s written multiple posts for the blog *Sounding Out!*, contributed a multimodal piece called “The Tale of Two Soundscapes: The Story of My Listening Body” to the collection *Provoke! Digital Sound Studies*, and—along with Jon Stone—co-edited a special issue of the digital journal *Harlot* on the subject of “Sonic Rhetorics.” Her work has appeared in the journals *College English* and *Composition Studies*. In this interview, we talk at length about her *College English* essay. It’s called “(Re)Educating the Senses: Multimodal Listening, Bodily Learning, and the Composition of Sonic Experiences,” and in 2014 it won the journal’s annual award for outstanding articles. We also discuss her current book project, which is entitled “Sounding Composition, Composing Sound: Multimodal Pedagogies for Embodied Listening.”  
  
Dr. Ceraso’s research is tied up with pedagogical questions, so we talk at length about how she approaches and integrates sound into the courses she teaches. Specifically, we discuss assignments that explore the connections that sound and listening have with food, touch, and place. Because Dr. Ceraso is especially interested in sound as an embodied experience that’s intertwined with other senses and feelings, I asked her to begin this episode by suggesting some ways in which you might shift your listening habits in order to attune yourself to the multimodal, multi-sensory qualities of what follows.  
  
[intro ends, cars and other street sounds fade in]  
  
[footsteps approaching on sidewalk]  
  
[woman clears throat]  
  
Ceraso [with street sounds in background]: Instead of thinking of this podcast as sonic content for you to consume through your ears, consider it as a situated experience. As you’re listening, think about how these sounds are making your body feel, whether you’re in a car [engine revs, car drives away] or walking with earbuds on the street.

[Sound of footsteps while Charles Mingus’s song “Strollin’ (Nostalgia in Times Square)” plays tinnily, as if through earbuds. A woman sings over a jazz ensemble: “Strolling / While strolling through the park / On a lovely but lonely afternoon.”]  
  
Try to be aware of how these sounds are shaping your experience of the environment that you’re inhabiting right now, how the environment is affecting your responses to the sounds or your specific listening behaviors. [street sounds get louder, fade to background] Just thinking about listening as an experience rather than sound as content for you to consume [street noise fades in again, car tires squeal, sounds fade out]  
  
Detweiler [henceforth “D”]: So I wanted to begin by talking about your essay “(Re)Educating the Senses,” and in that essay you begin by noting that listening is a, quote, “multisensory act.” So, in other words, we don’t just hear sound. We feel it, for instance [low, throbbing bass sound plays], which is a point you drive home via an interview with Deaf percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie. [clip of Evelyn Glennie playing a snare drum with her hands] And you go on to emphasize the importance not just of teaching students what sound means, but—and I’m quoting here again—“how sound works and affects.” So you aren’t interested in sound as just an extension of the meaning-making or hermeneutic work that we often ask students to do with written texts; you’re interested less it seems in how we make meaning of sound than how we, if you’ll allow me sort of a play on words here, make sense of it. Not in the sense of interpreting it, but in the sense of encountering it as emotional and embodied subjects.  
  
Ceraso [henceforth “C”]: Yeah. A common move in multimodal pedagogy is to treat sound as a kind of text. [radio static fades in as background] So we often ask students to analyze and interpret sound in different ways through maybe audio essays or podcasts—things like that. [Clip plays from the Beck song “Hotwax.” A man’s voice says, “I came here to tell you about the rhythms of the universe,” followed by a bongo beat that quickly fades out.] But in addition to asking students what sound means, this pedagogy teaches them to think about sound as an experience, as something that affects bodies in various situations and settings. So rather than homing in on specific kinds of content, like particular words or sounds [a young woman’s voice says “hello?” four times, each time with a different inflection], multimodal listening involves approaching sonic interactions more holistically. Another way to put that would be being more attuned to the ecological relationship between sound, bodies, and environments. And just to be clear, I’m not saying that we should stop teaching students to make meaning of sound. That would be absurd. [A nonsensical voice, in an imitation of the teacher’s voice from Charlie Brown television specials, goes, “Wah wah, wah wah wah wah wah.” Detweiler chuckles.] I’m saying that we should be teaching students that meaning-making is embodied. [A man’s voice shouts “Ow!” quickly and repeatedly, followed by a woman sobbing and a man laughing. Background radio static fades out.] And one concept that I find really useful for the kind of listening practice that I’m describing is Debra Hawhee’s term “mind-body complex” from her book *Bodily Arts*.

D: Hmm.

C: And she talks about how knowledge production occurs on the level of the body, but that doesn’t mean that thought isn’t important. Rather, as a mind-body complex, you move and learn in response to different situations. Thinking and feeling are inextricable. And in my research, I’m trying to get people to think about listening as a practice that is both bodily and reflective.

D: Hmm. Well, I was interested—one of the ways you talk about trying to encourage a more reflective, embodied relationship to sound is by emphasizing the way in which, you know, students and even ourselves are so used to having devices and having music that we can sort of carry with us, and having earbuds in our ears all the time [retro bass and drum groove plays, then fades to background] And so you’re trying to encourage an interruption in that constant flow of what you might call low-quality sound. [music stops, sound of car braking suddenly] To think about sound more holistically, as you’ve said. So what might you say, let’s say, if someone were to make the objection that encouraging students to take their earbuds out and really listen to the world around them and listen to natural sounds has a ring of tech-phobia to it.  
  
C: Right. And I want to make clear that I’m definitely not anti-technology or anti-earbuds. You can ask anybody who knows me: I love my earbuds. [Detweiler laughs] I devour podcasts and music constantly. [groove returns and continues playing in background] And in my teaching I assign a ton of projects that involve engaging with and producing digital sound. So the goal of my listening pedagogy is certainly not to make everyone unplug from digital devices. The listening practices I propose are actually geared in part toward helping students become better listeners in digital settings [bass continues, but drum beat becomes digital] So when I write about unplugging at times, I’m suggesting that to be critical listeners, we need to experience sound beyond digital contexts. [retro analog percussion returns, replacing digital beat] And I think gaining an understanding of how sonic rhetorics work in the world at large can actually make students more sensitive to how sound works in digital spaces [digital beat replaces analog]. Also, if we only ever teach listening via earbuds, we’re not accounting for people who don’t have access to hearing.

[music fades out]

D: Hmm.

C: So the pedagogy I offer is meant to be inclusive so that all students, regardless of bodily capacities, can participate in sonic work. And there are multiple ways to experience sound, as I write in the article, and I think we need to be more cognizant of that in our teaching, especially when it comes to accessibility.  
  
D: So would there be maybe a particular example of a non-digital sound or non-digital sonic environment that you would ask students to engage with to get them thinking in these particular ways?  
  
C: Sure. I mean, I do a lot of projects that ask students to pay attention to certain environments or their bodies in certain contexts that have to do with sounds. One example that comes to mind is a project for some of my Advanced Composition students called My Listening Body, and this project was inspired by disability studies scholars like Stephanie Kerschbaum, Jay Dolmage, Melanie Yergeau, Patricia Dunn, and many more people who’ve written about accessibility in relation to multimodality.

D: Mmhmm.

C: But the project requires students to create a piece of media in whatever mode they wish—so they can do it with audio, video, images, however they want—but they need to examine a sonic experience that caused them to be very aware of their own bodies or listening behaviors. It requires students, regardless of the experience that they choose to examine, to ensure that the media they create is widely accessible and inclusive, meaning that an audience should be able to engage with their project via multiple sensory and communicative pathways. This might involve creating textual transcripts with vivid descriptions of sound, or representing sound visually—basically, providing different ways to navigate and interact with the sonic content they create. In this way, students are reflecting on their own unique embodied experiences with sound as well as what kinds of embodied experiences their projects make possible. And I think that’s really a good way to draw attention to listening as an embodied act and the ways that many people—depending on, you know, their own embodied experiences—listen and interpret sound very differently.  
  
D: Hmm. Yeah. So you’re currently working on a book project that’s related to the stuff you talk about in that *College English* essay. And that book is tentatively titled, “Sounding Composition, Composing Sound: Multimodal Pedagogies for Embodied Listening.” And in that book, you talk about the work of audio design and sonically sensitive product design. You also talk quite a bit about and with Evelyn Glennie, the percussionist that we’d mentioned earlier. So I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about how you’re taking the work that those sorts of folks do and trying to put it in conversation with some of the work that’s going on around sound in rhetoric and composition.  
  
C: Sure. The inspiration for the book project really started when I saw a documentary called *Touch the Sound*, which features Evelyn Glennie, and I talk about that in the article.

[A clip plays from the trailer for *Touch the Sound*. A ringing sound is followed by Glennie saying, “Hearing is a form of touch.” She’s interrupted by a sudden percussive sound. Glennie continues: “Something that’s so hard to describe, you know, something that comes—sound that comes to you.” An intense rhythmic drumming plays for a few seconds.]

C: It [*Touch the Sound*] really made me think about listening in an entirely new way, and I wanted to find examples of the kind of expansive, beyond-the-ears listening techniques that Glennie practices in the film. I also knew that I wanted to write about listening in relation to sonic composing because I think that when we’re teaching in multimodal composing courses, we often ignore the fact that sonic composition does involve listening but we don’t often talk about listening. We just kind of, you know, expect students to do it when they’re dealing with sound. I wanted to really talk about listening in a critical way, so I wanted to find examples of listeners who actually create stuff with sound. And in addition to Glennie, I ended up choosing to focus on acoustic designers who design sound for various kinds of spaces and buildings, and product designers like automotive acoustic engineers who design the sound for cars.  
  
D: Hmm.  
  
C: And these kinds of sound professionals all practice what I consider to be multimodal listening. One example—so I did get to interview a couple of acoustic designers when I was in Pittsburgh, and one thing that they both stressed was they don’t consider sound in isolation. So they’re always thinking about how sound relates to the space of the room and also the materials that the room is constructed with. How the sound of the room will affect listening bodies in that room. So they’re thinking about sound in an ecological way rather than just thinking about, What does this sound mean in this context? They’re really thinking about the experience of sound in a space. For instance, on example they like to give was the lobbies of buildings—like, large buildings. Often in lobbies, acoustic designers are hired to create more of a reverberant sound [lobby chatter fades in, echoing and reverberant] so that when you walk in it sounds more lively. Even if it’s kind of dead in terms of the people in the space, it sounds kind of lively, like there’s a lot going on. It’s a warm space when you walk in. Whereas when you walk back further into the building—like in office spaces, for instance [same chatter continues, but duller without much reverb or echo]—that sound is deadened, and often they have to apply technologies that will dampen the sound as you walk through the building because people need to work back there.

D: Hmm.

C: And it needs to be more quiet. So just kind of directing, you know, how people move through space and feel about spaces as they’re listening. They talked a lot about the way that sound makes you think about and move through spaces in different ways, which I thought was really fascinating.   
  
D: Yeah. And I can imagine that anyone who’s stayed in one of those sort of open-concept hotels with kind of the hollow middle and dealt with, you know, people partying at the bar till three in the morning can sympathize with good acoustic design then.  
  
C: Right.

[both chuckle, then loud, echoing bar noises fade in]  
  
C [bar sounds fade out]: Yeah, they don’t just think about what sound means in these contexts. They really think about how it works as an experience. And that bodily knowledge informs their composing practices. So throughout the book I discuss how these practices adopted from music, architecture, and design can inform the teaching of listening in rhet/comp, and how rhet/comp can also contribute to a critical sonic education more broadly. The two questions that drive the book are, What does it mean to be a thoughtful attuned listener at this moment in time?, and How is listening, which is often thought of as a receptive act, related to production or to the ways that we compose with sound in other media?

D: Hmm.

C: As I see it, the main contribution that the book is making to the field is that it connects listening directly to creating things with sound, and I like to say that it teaches students to listen like makers. Obviously, three-dimensional environments are a lot different than digital spaces, the digital environments students are working with, but I think how that relates to composing in digital spaces with students is that there’s a way to think about the digital space as an environment itself. And so, for instance, instead of just having, say, students 1 and 2 use sound in a website to create a mood, if they were approaching this as an acoustic designer, they would think about how sound is related to the other elements in that space—so the color, or the texture, or the visual layout, or the movement they have going on on the website, how does sound interact with all those things holistically?—rather than just embedding a sound file in a website or on a blog.  
  
D: Hmm. I’ve got to imagine that thinking about all this not only affects the way that you have students approach digital spaces, but would affect in some ways how you and students think about the classroom that you’re in as a sonic space in a particular way. I mean, is that something that comes up?  
  
C: Yes, absolutely. Actually, in the My Listening Body project I described, there was kind of a problem in terms of presenting the student work in that class. The room was really a terrible room just for presenting student work in general. It was a computer lab with tables that we couldn’t move, it was hard to see, and so one student was really frustrated with the limitations of the material space of the room in terms of presenting her assignment, and also the flatness of digital space. She wanted to represent a Marco Polo game.  
  
D: The sort of pool game where, like, one person with their eyes closed is shouting “Marco” and somebody else responds by shouting “Polo”?  
  
C: Right. And so the fact that she couldn’t represent her bodily experience playing Marco Polo and how that is so dependent on, like, directional sound. So what she did to recreate this experience for this project was, everybody had GoPro cameras on and they recorded the sounds of an actual Marco Polo game as it happened. And then in our computer lab, she had different computers set up to actually say “Marco Polo” so that there was directional sound happening in the room to recreate that experience in a more immersive way.

[In the right speaker, a high voice calls, “Marco!” In the left speaker, a low voice responds, “Polo!”]  
  
D: Huh.  
  
C: So she really thought about the constraints of digital media, and also the room itself, and found ways around that. So on the larger speakers in the room, there was water sounds and splashing and that sort of thing [sound of lapping water fades in], but then all the computers in different parts of the room were calling out to each other—  
  
[Water sounds continue. The high and low voices call out “Marco!” and “Polo!” five times, with each subsequent call bouncing from left to right to center in the audio file.]  
  
C: —which was the most lively digital project I’ve ever had a student do. So I think this kind of pedagogy really gets students thinking in more creative ways about, you know, the limitations and possibilities of sound in all kinds of environments.

D: Yeah! So you’ve talked quite a bit at this point about some great projects and some great things that you keep in mind in different classes that you’ve taught, and I wanted to zoom in particularly on one component of one course that we haven’t talked about yet. The course was one that you taught called Sound, Composition, & Culture.  
  
C: Yup. I just taught that, so it just ended in December.  
  
D: Okay, great. And so the component of the course that I wanted to talk to you about was, I believe, part of what you discussed at a recent presentation that you did at the MLA conference in Austin, and it’s a so-called “multisensory dining event” that happened near the end of that Sound, Composition, & Culture course. And I would love to hear a little bit about what that event was, sort of what led to it, and what senses and experiences you were trying to put in conversation there.  
  
C: Yes. This was such a fun project, and I’m so grateful to the thoughtful students who participated in this event and went along with me. It was definitely experimental for me as a teacher, and I’m sure that they were quite confused at first about why they were doing this project. But I think by the end it really ended up being a great thing for all of us. So I should say that Sound, Composition, & Culture is an upper-level course with a mix of seniors and master’s students that were participating, and the class required students to produce a range of different kinds of sonic projects. And we also read scholarship from rhet/comp, sound studies, and sound art and design to sort of inform these projects. But the idea behind the multisensory meal project really stemmed from my book-project research. I was interested in finding out what might become possible if we were to ask students to design multisensory experiences with sounds instead of more familiar kinds of sonic texts. And so I ended up assigning this collaborative, semester-long project that required students to create original sonic compositions that complemented the visual design, smell, texture, and taste of a prepared meal.

D: Hmm.

C: And the theme of the meal was comfort food. So the menu included an appetizer of homemade mac and cheese [a young girl’s voice mutters “mmmmm”], an entree of pulled pork sandwiches and coleslaw [young girl repeats “mmmmm” more intensely], and warm apple crisp and vanilla ice cream for dessert [young girl repeats “mmmmm” even more intensely].

D: So we should pause for a minute in case anybody needs to get up and go get some snacks at this point, probably.

[Ceraso laughs]  
  
C: Yes, the goal of the event was for my students to compose sound designs that, along with other design elements, would enhance and amplify feelings of comfort for our participants, right?  
  
D: Hmm.  
  
C: So the goal of the project was to get students thinking holistically about how sound works with other sensory modes and materials to shape experiences in highly specific ways. And this is, again, quite different to the kind of sonic texts that we ask students to do like creating podcasts. This is really thinking about sound in relation to other senses—  
  
D: Right.  
  
C: —in a way that I haven’t done before. The event was co-sponsored by MITH, the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities, and the Design, Cultures, and Creativity program—or the DCC—at the University of Maryland–College Park. And MITH actually loaned us a free amateur chef, which was amazing.  
  
Eric: Ooh.  
  
C: Yes. And so at the end of the semester, I ended up bussing my students to College Park to put on this event for a number of students and faculty in the DCC program there.  
  
D: Mmhmm.  
  
C: So my students spent the first half of the semester conceptualizing the event, and they worked in teams. So I had them working on teams based on the part of the meal that they were assigned to design, and so we had a Team Appetizer, Team Main Course, Team Dessert—and Team Sonic Palate Cleanser, and they were responsible for the transitions between the parts of the meals. We also read a lot of scholarship about the relationship between sound and food, including a book called *The Perfect Meal: The Multisensory Science of Food and Dining*. So one of my favorite parts of the project, and one of the requirements, was that each team had to integrate food-science research into their sound designs. There’s so much great research out there about the relationship between sound and taste—and how sound influences eating experiences of all kinds—coming out of the Crossmodal Research Laboratory at Oxford, and so students had a ton of material to work with here. And a lot of this is featured in *The Perfect Meal*. For instance, some groups chose to use [chimes and birdsong fade in] high-frequency sounds like wind chimes and birdsong to bring out the sweetness of particular foods, and this choice was based on multiple studies that found a correlation between high-frequency sounds and the intensity of sweetness. [sounds fade out]  
  
D: Huh.  
  
C: So there were a lot of little nuggets of research embedded in these sound designs. Another one that comes to mind is, to bring on crunchiness [sound of crunching and chewing], like the crunchy texture of the coleslaw, they including sounds of crunching leaves—like, people walking through leaves at one point. [sound of footsteps on dry leaves, then crunching and chewing sound plays simultaneously]  
  
D: Oh, wow.  
  
C [crunching sounds fade]: And obviously the participants didn’t know about all this. [ambient restaurant sounds fade in] It was subtly included in the sound designs, but—  
  
D: So was this being sort of piped in on speakers in the room?  
  
C: Yes, so they were on overheard speakers. We had surround sound in that room in particular, so it was going on in the room itself.  
  
D: Mmm, okay.  
  
C [restaurant sounds continue]: This was very much an event. The students came, the table was visually designed as well, so there was themes. The sound designs moved from sort of inside to outside. [restaurant ambience fades into campfire ambience] So it ended in sort of a night picnic, and we projected a fire onto the projector. It was definitely a transformation of the space visually as well as sonically. [campfire sounds fade out]  
  
D: Mmm, yeah.  
  
C: And after the event we talked for about an hour with our participants. Participants got to talk about what they experienced, and my students got to talk about their sound-design choices and their composing process. And it was really interesting because participants claimed that overall the students’ sound designs were very successful, and they felt lulled into comfort by this experience. But there was also a lot of discussion about subjectivity. Specifically, how notions of comfort and comfort food varied widely among participants based on things like, you know, age, race, ethnicity, gender, class, and other factors.  
  
D: Mmhmm.  
  
C: So we ended up having a great discussion about both the effectiveness of this kind of multisensory composition, thinking about how sound was so well integrated with all these other design elements, but also the limits of sensory persuasion. You know, a lot of that depends on the bodies in the room and their past experiences. It was a really, really great event, and I do plan to write about it, I hope. So that’s something that I’m hoping to do a media project on in the future because we did film and record the event.  
  
D: Well yeah! That’s all so interesting. You got a little bit into the connection between sound and place there, and I wanted to ask you about one other assignment from the Sound, Composition, & Culture course that gets into that relationship. You talk about a version of this that you did in Pittsburgh, called “Sounding Pittsburgh,” in the *College English* article, but I know that you carried this kind of assignment forward into your more recent classrooms.  
  
C: Yeah. Again, last semester, students did a soundmapping project where we actually made a digital map of the soundscape of UMBC’s campus. And we used a website called Soundcities, which allows you to embed and tag sounds directly into a Google Map. So my students spent several weeks collecting field recordings around campus at different times of the day, just on their smartphones, and they could upload them straight to the website. And so by the end, we had something like I think over 300 field recordings of our campus, and if you actually go to Soundcities’ website—basically you can navigate the map by clicking on different cities that people have uploaded sounds for—and if you click on Baltimore, you can actually listen to the map I’m talking about. But after the process was done and we had all these sound recordings, students spent about a week listening to and studying the map, and then they ended up writing about what information or stories the map ended up revealing about UMBC or about student life on campus. So they were reflecting also on what digital sound maps make possible or not compared to other kinds of maps.  
  
D: Hmm.  
  
C: So for these students, I guess the most interesting thing about this experiment was the sheer number of natural sounds in our map. [field recording from soundmapping project fades in] We had a lot of birds chirping, insects, wind, and rustling trees. The students were quick to point out how different our sonic representation of campus was compared to the way the campus is marketed on our university web site. [field recording, which features wind and insects, crossfades into urban traffic sounds] For instance, one of the ways that the university tries to attract students is by having a Baltimore address, which suggests it’s an urban environment with lots of stuff to do. Technically our address is Baltimore, but we’re really not in the city at all. [traffic sounds crossfade back into field recording] It’s very rural, so the sound map provided a striking contrast to the other ways that the school’s represented to the public.  
  
D: Yeah.  
  
C: And it revealed something about our campus that textual descriptions or maps and images alone wouldn’t have been able to fully capture. [field recording fades out] So I think, you know, doing soundscape projects makes students more aware of how much they can learn from listening to sonic environments, and it also gets them thinking about how important sound is in terms of experiencing a place.  
  
D: Yeah, that’s fascinating. Before we get to the final component of this interview, I wanted to ask you about the way that you end the *College English* article as well as the current overview of the book project. You do so by writing that, as teachers and as students and as scholars, we need to stop just listening *in* to sound and, quote, “learn to listen up, out, through, and around.” Since that’s the call that you sound at the end of both of those projects, how exactly are you calling your readers to listen in terms of these sort of different relations and prepositional phrases you use there?  
  
C: I’ll just go kind of through them one by one. By “up,” I mean, listening up in this context means to me being an attuned listener, heightening your senses, and that might involve literally turning your head upward away from your digital device or whatever you’re doing and paying attention to what’s happening sonically in the world around you. “Out,” to me, means going out into the world with the intention of listening and exploring various places. Throughout both the article and the book project, I stress the importance of experiencing a range of different kinds of sonic environments—not just digital ones. “Through” and “around” are kind of connected in my mind, and I think they both have to do with movement and the body. So this part is about paying attention to embodied responses to sound as we’re moving through and around different spaces. And again, like, taken together here, and just generally, I’m calling for a kind of listening that is more holistic than simply paying attention to sound through our ears alone.  
  
Detweiler: Hmm. Yeah. So we’re going to move to sort of the last component of this interview here, where I let the interviewee that I spoke with previously pose a question for my next interviewee without knowing who that person is going to be. So your question comes, actually, from someone familiar to you, someone you were recently on an MLA panel with, and that’s Byron Hawk. And he has posed a question that I think is probably both deceptively simple and immensely complicated. [Ceraso chuckles] We’ll see how you choose to approach it here.  
  
[clip from Hawk interview plays]  
  
Hawk: When I first just sat down to very quickly think about that, I just went with the first thing that came off the top of my head, and it’s: Who are you? And that could be taken very existentially or, you know, it could be taken as a lark.  
  
[Ceraso laughs]  
  
C: Okay. Here’s my answer.  
  
D: All right.  
  
C: Are you ready for it?   
  
I don’t know if any of us are ready for it, but we’ll see.  
  
[both laugh]  
  
C: Here it is.  
  
[Instrumental introduction to RETROSONIC’s song “Rock N’ Roll Riff” plays. A synthesized bass is joined by a keyboard, then an electric guitar, then a drum kit before the song fades out.]  
  
D: Do you want to offer any explanation or anything like that?  
  
C: I think I’m going to let the sound speak for itself.  
  
D: Okay, great. [Ceraso laughs] Well, we will let this answer out into the world, I think as ambiguous an answer as the question was—so fitting here. And now we come to your turn for you to pose a question for the next person I’m going to interview—again, without knowing who that person’s going to be.  
  
C: Let’s see. I have a couple in mind. Lately, I’ve been really interested in the relationship between sound and memory, I think because so many sonic experiences are fleeting, right? They just happen and then they’re just gone. But sometimes they really end up sticking with you, and this is something that a lot of my students bring up, and I love hearing people’s stories about this. So I think my question will be: What was the most memorable sonic experience you’ve ever had, and what do you think made it so memorable? So, why did it stay with you?  
  
D: Well all right. Well, Steph, thank you again so much for taking the time for this interview today.  
  
C: Thanks so much. This was so much fun, Eric.  
  
D: Yeah! All right.  
  
[drums fade in, then fade into background underneath voiceover]  
  
D: [voiceover] That’s it for this episode! Hope you felt what Dr. Ceraso had to say, and many thanks to her for taking the time for this interview. If you’re interested in learning more about my interviewee’s work, you can visit her website, stephceraso.com. That’s S-T-E-P-H-C-E-R-A-S-O-dot-com. And if you’re interested in more on *Rhetoricity*, you can visit rhetoricity.libsyn.com or follow the podcast’s Twitter handle, @RhetCast. Next month, I’ll be presenting on this podcast at the 2016 Rhetoric Society of America conference in Atlanta, Georgia, as well as the Computers & Writing conference in Rochester, New York. Feel free to pass me a note via Twitter if you’re interested in talking more about podcasting at either of those conferences. I’ll be back very soon to bring you a syndicated interview with Joyce Locke Carter, who will be giving the chair’s address at this year’s Conference on College Composition and Communication. Till next time, I’m Eric Detweiler and I’m touched that you listened.  
  
[drums fade in, outro theme plays]