The 32nd Annual Dickens Society Symposium

Dickens Rocks!

Virtual, 12–15 July 2027

> They danced to the popular Revolution song, keeping a ferocious time that was like a gnashing of teeth in unison.
>
> —Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*

The Symposium will be organized out of Cleveland, home to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and that claim inspires our topic: Dickens Rocks! What did Dickens think about music? How did he incorporate it into his writing and thinking? What did musicians (Victorian, 20th-century, and modern) think about Dickens? What does it mean to think about Dickens *musically*? What happens when we focus on the *melo* in *melo*dramatic? We embrace thinking about "rock" in as broad a sense as possible. Topics may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Victorian song culture and Dickens's quotations of popular music
- Dickens's singers and musicians (Dick Swiveller, Harold Skimpole, Young Bagnet, Cavalletto, John Jasper, Frederick Dorrit)
- Musical qualities of Dickens's prose and musical metaphors
- Dickens and Minstrelsy
- Musical spaces: streets, concert halls, churches, etc.
- Dickens and the musical industry (Hutchinson Family Singers, Jenny Lind; Silas Wegg; etc.)
- Dickens on musical genre: opera, classical, folk, etc.
- Musical adaptations of Dickens's prose and poetry
- Allusions to Dickens's works in modern popular music (rock, rap, country, etc.)
- Dickens and mountaineering, geology, petrology
- "Rocky" in the sense of struggle or upheaval (social, political, systemic, etc.)
- Dickens as rock star
- "Between a rock and a hard place," foundations, stability, etc.

As always, papers on Dickensian topics other than the stated theme will also be welcome.

Details about the program, bursaries, awards, and prizes, and all other essentials including the form for submitting a proposal will be found on the Dickens Society website, dickenssociety.org, together with membership information. Please contact the organizing committee, Lydia Craig, Christian Lehmann, and Sophia Jochem, with any questions at dickensrocks2027@gmail.com.

Proposals of **250 words maximum** should be submitted by **31 January 2027** through the Dickens Society website. AI-generated content may not be used in proposals or symposium presentations. Please note that all presenters must be members of the Dickens Society by the time of the Symposium. Membership costs $35.00/year and includes a subscription to *Dickens Quarterly*.