This lecture explores the work of an ensemble of feminist culture workers, and it aims to examine the ways in which each of these artist-activist-intellectuals functions as a mediator of sound and cultural memory. The talk will consider how each woman drew on performative, phonographic and discursive technologies of archiving, recording, reproducing and disseminating sonic cultures and, in so doing, shaped the politics and poetics of modernity. From iconic figures such as Zora Neale Hurston, Abbey Lincoln, Mary Lou Williams and Lena Horne to lesser-known figures like blues guitarist Esther Mae Scott, feminist blues record collector Rosetta Reitz and pioneering feminist rock critic Ellen Willis, the lecture will focus on a range of avant-garde intellectuals who innovated, navigated and mediated subterranean sound networks that shaped, informed, disrupted and (re)recorded racial, gender and class identity formations, as well as the hermeneutics of feminist musicking.

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Reception to follow