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## HOLD ME DOWN

By Ben Lauren

Through his album *Hold Me Down: Toward a Rhetoric of Feel and the liner notes that accompany it*, Ben Lauren argues that rhetorical theory can help both formally and informally trained musicians compose songs. This rhetorical theory helps him to anchor his own composing strategy of relying on feel. Feel, as Lauren explains it, is where an artist reflects on their reaction to a song's melody, lyrics, and dynamics. Relying on feel as a creative-critical method of composing requires songwriters to develop habits that allow them to attend to its emergence in their writing process.

To illustrate these ideas, Lauren shares his album *Hold Me Down*, which he wrote to process a traumatic experience from when he was a child. The album consists of 10 music tracks, 8 recorded conversations with the artists he collaborated with, and extensive liner notes that depict the collision of identities that make up personal and professional lives. By drawing on his experience as a singer and songwriter and his scholarly training, Lauren develops a rhetorical language for thinking about music that puts the abstract concept of feel in concrete form.

**Ben Lauren** is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Writing Studies and Director of the Co-Major in Innovation and Society at the University of Miami. His scholarly work focuses on the intersection of writing and design; rhetorical theory; and organizational, institutional, and community change. He is also a songwriter, best known for his work as singer/songwriter with the band No Address.

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