

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Rising Stars and Encore Appearances, Tricentennial Tales, Arts and Letters, and Women of Williams (WOW!)  
Slated for the 2018 Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival**

**NEW ORLEANS**—The Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival returns to the historic French Quarter for its 32<sup>nd</sup> annual celebration of contemporary literature, culture, theater, and the works of Tennessee Williams. From March 21-25, 2018, attendees will enjoy celebrated award-winning speakers alongside fresh new voices on the literary scene.

The five-day event offers a range of diverse speakers and performers, including Jami Attenberg, Jack Bedell, Jericho Brown, Lisa D'Amour, Beth Ann Fennelly, Richard Ford, Jennifer Haigh, Walter Isaacson, Laura Lippman, Nathaniel Rich, Amy Ryan, Erica Spindler, Justin Torres, Calvin Trillin, and many more.

“The arts have been the heartbeat of New Orleans for 300 years,” says Paul Willis, Executive Director. “We’re excited to celebrate this history with remembrances of the past and exciting looks to the future.”

The 2018 program includes writer’s craft sessions; scholarly and entertaining discussions among distinguished panelists; celebrity interviews; theater, food and music events; a scholars conference; breakfast book club; French Quarter literary and LGBT walking tours; a book fair; and special evening events and social gatherings.

**32nd annual Festival speaker line-up includes:**

**Jami Attenberg**, best-selling author of *All Grown Up*; **Jack Bedell**, the new Louisiana Poet Laureate and author of *Come Rain, Come Shine*; **Jericho**

**Brown**, award-winning poet and our 2018 Poetry Contest Judge; **Lisa D'Amour**, Pulitzer finalist and multi-award winning playwright of *Detroit* and *Airline Highway*; **Richard Ford**, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Independence Day* and most recently *Between Them: A Memoir of My Parents*; **Jennifer Haigh**, author of five novels, the most recent *Heat and Light*, and judge of our 2018 Fiction Contest; **Walter Isaacson**, best-selling author of the biographies of *Benjamin Franklin*, *Steve Jobs*, *Albert Einstein*, and the forthcoming *Leonardo Da Vinci*. **Laura Lippman**, *New York Times* bestselling author of acclaimed stand-alones and the award-winning Tess Monaghan series—her latest book is *Wilde Lake* and the forthcoming *Sunburn*; **Nathaniel Rich**, author of the forthcoming novel *King Zeno*; **Amy Ryan**, Tony-nominated actress for *Uncle Vanya* and the 2005 revival of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and Academy Award nominee for her work in the film *Gone Baby Gone*; **Erica Spindler**, *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author, most recently *The Other Girl*; **Justin Torres**, judge of our new flash fiction contest and the author of *We the Animals*; **Calvin Trillin**, author of *Jackson, 1964: And Other Dispatches from Fifty Years of Reporting on Race in America* and the hilarious *Tummy Trilogy*, and many other books. Many more speakers yet to be announced!

### Literary Highlights

**Richard Ford** leads a writer's craft session on the short story; **Nancy Sharon Collins** facilitates a session on reviving the art of letter writing; **Calvin Trillin** riffs on his prolific and varied writings; and **Lara Naughton** leads a much needed session on compassion for writers. Other craft sessions will feature **Zachary Lazar** and **Erica Spindler**.

We also welcome New Orleans' rising stars in the literary world: **Anne Gisleon**, author of *The Futilitarians: Our Year of Thinking, Drinking, Reading and Grieving*; and novelists **C. Morgan Babst**, author of *The Floating*

*World*; **Ladee Hubbard**, author of *The Talented Ribkins*; **Nathaniel Rich**, author of *King Zeno*; **Margaret Wilkerson Sexton**, author of *A Kind of Freedom*; and many many more.

This year we celebrate New Orleans' Tricentennial with two landmark publications: *New Orleans: The First 300 Years*, edited by **Errol Laborde** and **Peggy Scott Laborde**, and *New Orleans to the World*, edited by **Nancy Dixon**. Editors and contributors will discuss their varied perspectives on the city's great contributions to the country and the world.

### **Theater Highlights**

#### ***A Streetcar Named Desire* Directed by Maxwell Williams**

The story of Blanche DuBois and her collision with her sensuous and brutal brother-in-law, Stanley Kowalski, is as dynamic and searing today as it was when it premiered in 1947. In conjunction with the 32nd annual TW/NOLF, **Le Petit Theatre** presents New Orleans' signature play—the Pulitzer Prize-winning masterwork by America's great poet-playwright, Tennessee Williams.

**Southern Rep** continues its commitment to the Tennessee Williams canon with the one-act ***And Tell Sad Stories of the Death of Queens***, directed by New Orleans' theater icon Ricky Graham. The play showcases the barely contained desires and passions that erupt during a fateful Mardi Gras holiday. Candy—a successful New Orleans interior decorator and drag queen—picks up a rough sailor and spoils him with money and attention. When he leaves her suddenly on her dreaded 35<sup>th</sup> birthday, it's up to the two queens upstairs to offer consolation and kindness.

**The Tennessee Williams Theatre Company of New Orleans** will present ***One Arm***, Moises Kaufman's adaptation of a screenplay by Tennessee Williams, based on his short story by the same title. It's about a navy veteran and boxer who lost his arm in a car accident and must resort to hustling on Canal Street to make his living. When a john pushes him too far, though, he finds himself on death row. He escapes into the correspondence of his past clients for spiritual

salvation until his number is up. Directed by **Augustin J Correro**.

### **Special Events**

#### **THE WOMEN OF WILLIAMS (WOW!): An Evening of Theater and Discussion**

The Women of Williams is an evening of readings and candid discussion centering around Tennessee Williams' unforgettable female characters: Blanche Dubois, Maggie The Cat, Lady, Serafina Delle Rose, and so many more. While these characters are often described as larger than life, it may be more accurate to say these women cry for life itself to be larger, with more space for desire to roam free. We will welcome a group of actresses who have played some of Williams' most famous characters, including **Amy Ryan** (Stella Kowolski), **Aimee Hayes** (Blanche Dubois) and **Brenda Currin** (Violet Venable). They will read scenes from the plays and share their thoughts about the demands and rewards of embodying Williams' epic women. **Hosted by Pulitzer finalist Lisa D'Amour.**

The annual **Tennessee Williams Tribute Reading** featuring the biggest names at the Festival returns to The Jaxson on the River with the theme of "**Dear Folks: Tennessee Williams Writes about his Friends and Family.**" His immediate family, his lovers, comrades, and close friends formed an extensive network of fascinating people—and at one time or another, the playwright wrote about all of them. Williams' feelings for those who were closest to him are the threads that make up the fabric for his writing with many of his family members transformed into characters in his plays.

We are excited to bring to the Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival the **Letters Read** series curated by **Nancy Sharon Collins**. Collins is a local stationer, designer, and book artist. She is an expert in personal letters and the writing of them. Collins curates the Letters Read events featuring well-known local actors. The events place the letters in an historic context, giving the audience a glimpse into the world of the writer. We look forward to her interpretation of letters by Tennessee Williams, with special emphasis on his correspondence with Donald Windham and James Laughlin.

Also during the Festival weekend, **Saints and Sinners Literary Festival (SAS)**,

our annual LGBT literary conference now celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, gathers members from the national LGBT literary community. Featured speakers include **Jericho Brown, Clayton Delery, Elana Dykewomon, Peter Gajdics, Jewelle Gomez, Greg Herren, Martin Hyatt, Judith Katz, Felice Picano, Uriel Quesada, Radclyffe, J.M. Redmann, Justin Torres, Hilary Zaid**, and many others. Visit [sasfest.org](http://sasfest.org) for more details.

### **Writing Contests**

The Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival announces 4 writing contests with prizes of cash, Festival tickets, publication, and public readings. Deadlines: One-Act Play—November 1; Very Short Fiction—Nov 8; Poetry—Nov 15; Fiction—Nov 30. Judges include **Jennifer Haigh, Justin Torres, Jericho Brown**, and **Lisa D'Amour**. For more information and submission guidelines: [tennesseewilliams.net](http://tennesseewilliams.net).

Most events take place in New Orleans' historic French Quarter. Sites providing generous support and hosting events include Hotel Monteleone, the Festival's host hotel; The Historic New Orleans Collection; Williams Research Center; Beauregard-Keyes House; The Jaxson on the River; Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré; Dickie Brennan's Tableau Restaurant and Bourbon House; Muriel's Jackson Square Restaurant; and Palm Court Jazz Cafe; among others.

**Festival Tickets** will go on sale in January. VIP Passes are \$600; Literary Discussion Passes are \$100 (\$70 for students); a One-Day Pass is \$40; theater/special events range from \$10-\$75; writer's craft sessions are \$25 each; Best Value: Combo Pass \$200 (includes all 8 writer's craft sessions and a Literary Discussion Pass); the Scholars Conference is \$20; walking tours are \$25. Group rates, available on request, are 20% off for groups of 20 or more. For more information and a full listing of events, call 504-581-1144 or visit [www.tennesseewilliams.net](http://www.tennesseewilliams.net).

### **About the Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival**

*The Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival celebrates the genius of*

*Tennessee Williams, who once called our city his “spiritual home,” and the contemporary artists who are as honest and unflinching in their examination of the human condition as our patron playwright. Founded in 1986 by a group of cultural enthusiasts, the Festival has grown from a small gathering of 500 to a five-day literary and multi-cultural event, which sees 11,000+ seats filled each year. In late March, we toast Williams’ birthday with theater, literary panels, food, and music events featuring luminaries and the brightest new talents in American arts. For more information, visit [www.tennesseewilliams.net](http://www.tennesseewilliams.net) or find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).*

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