



31st Annual  
**TENNESSEE WILLIAMS/  
NEW ORLEANS LITERARY FESTIVAL**  
MARCH 22-26, 2017

**Iconic and Emerging Voices, a Victorian Séance, and a Night in Storyville**  
*Slated for the 2017 Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival*

**NEW ORLEANS**—The Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival returns to the historic French Quarter for its 31<sup>st</sup> annual celebration of contemporary literature, culture, theater, and the works of Tennessee Williams. From March 22-26, 2017, 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 Dorothy Allison, Bryan Batt, Roy Blount Jr., Patricia Bosworth, Rick Bragg, Jericho Brown, Robert Olen Butler, Dick Cavett, Michael Cerveris, Lisa D'Amour, Amy Dickinson, Gabrielle Lucille Fuentes, Winston Groom, Wally Lamb, Nicholas Mainieri, John Patrick Shanley, and many more.

“The arts are the heartbeat of New Orleans,” says Paul Willis, Executive Director. “Now more than ever, it is important for us to celebrate the creative spirit of so many diverse voices.”

The 2017 program includes master classes; 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.

**31st annual Festival speaker line-up includes:**

**Dorothy Allison**, award-winning author of *Bastard Out of Carolina*, *Cavedweller* and the forthcoming *She Who*, and judge of our 2017 Fiction Contest;

**Roy Blount, Jr.**, humorist, regular cast-member of NPR's beloved *Wait Wait . . . Don't Tell Me!*, and author of *Save Room For Pie*;

**Patricia Bosworth**, acclaimed journalist and biographer, who has authored biographies on Montgomery Clift, Diane Arbus, and Marlon Brando;

**Rick Bragg**, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author of *Jerry Lee Lewis: His Own Story*; *All Over But the Shoutin'*; *Ava's Man*; and his latest, *My Southern Journey: True Stories from the Heart of the South*;

**Robert Olen Butler**, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain* and *Perfume River*;

**Dick Cavett**, Emmy-winning broadcaster, who has interviewed many cultural icons including Tennessee Williams, and author of *Talk Show: Confrontations, Pointed Commentary, and Off-Screen Secrets*, and *Brief Encounters: Conversations, Magic Moments, and Assorted Hijinks*;

**Michael Cerveris**, Tony Award-winning actor who has appeared *Assassins*, *Sweeny Todd*, *Road Show*, and *Fun Home*;

**Peter Cooley**, Louisiana Poet Laureate and judge of our 2016 Poetry Contest;

**Lisa D'Amour**, Pulitzer finalist and multi-award winning playwright of *Detroit* and *Airline Highway*;

**Amy Dickinson**, acclaimed advice columnist whose column, "Ask Amy," appears in over 150 newspapers nation-wide, and has an estimated 22 million daily readers;

**Winston Groom**, *New York Times* best-selling author of *Forrest Gump*, *The Aviators*, *El Paso*, and *Shiloh, 1862*;

**Wally Lamb**, *New York Times* best-selling novelist of *She's Come Undone*, *I Know This Much Is True*, *We Are Water*, and *I'll Take You There*;

**Lara Naughton**, author of *The Jaguar Man*, a memoir of Naughton's experience as a victim of kidnap and rape in Belize and her road to healing;

**Julia Reed**, acclaimed food and drink columnist and author of *Julia Reed's South, But Mama Always Put Vodka in Her Sangria!*, and *Ham Biscuits, Hostess Gowns, and Other Southern Specialties*;

**John Patrick Shanley**, Academy Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and director whose plays include *Doubt*, *Outside Mullingar*, and *Prodigal Son*;

**Michael Farris Smith**, award winning author of *Rivers* and *Desperation Road*.

### Literary Highlights

**Rick Bragg** leads a master class on the role of family in essay writing. **Wally Lamb** offers advice on creating memorable characters, **Robert Olen Butler** explains the power of dreams on the mind of the writer, and **Amy Dickinson**, "Ask Amy," reveals her secrets to writing a successful advice column and offers audience members personalized advice. Other master classes will feature **Roy Blount, Jr.**, **Dick Cavett**, **Lisa D'Amour**, and **Patrick Maney**.

Literary Panels will include authors **Ethan Brown**, **Justin Nobel**, and **John DeSantis** discussing crime, corruption, and race relations in Louisiana over the last 130 years. Emerging writers **Jennine Capó Crucet**, **Gabrielle Lucille Fuentes**, **Matthew Griffin**, and **Nicholas Mainieri** discuss the rollercoaster ride that is writing a first novel. Additional panel discussions include race and politics, New Orleans landmarks, Southern hospitality, writing about family, Tennessee Williams in the 70s, the Chinese in the Gulf South, and many more.

The TW/NOLF is excited to partner with the Creative Writing Workshop at the University of New Orleans to celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. On Friday, March 24, the CWW welcomes back alumni for a day of panels focused around their MFA experiences and the exciting avenues that have opened up in their lives because of it. Alumni authors **Sonja Livingston**, **Bill Loehfelm**, **Amanda Boyden**, **Bill Lavendar**, and **Skip Horack** along with faculty members **Rick Barton**, **Randy Bates**, **John Gery**, **Carolyn Hembree**, **Barb Johnson**, **Joanna Leake**, and **M.O. Walsh** headline an impressive group of participants to celebrate 25 years of the CWW.

### Theater Highlights

Southern Rep continues its commitment to the Tennessee Williams canon with *Sweet Bird of Youth*, directed by **Mel. Cook**. **Leslie Castay** stars as Alexandra del Lago in Williams' cautionary tale in which the only thing more dangerous than obsessing over the past is striving to repeat it.

The Tennessee Williams Theatre Company of New Orleans will present Tennessee Williams' *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* directed by **Augustin Correro**. Big Easy Award winners **Janet Shea** and **Evan Spiegelman** star in Williams' classic 1963 treatise on death and the material world.

The annual **Tennessee Williams Tribute Reading** returns to The Jaxson on the River with the theme of **Tennessee Williams and the Eternal City**, featuring **Bryan Batt**, **Patricia Bosworth**, **Dick Cavett**, **Michael Cerveris**, **Brenda Currin**, and **Amy Dickinson** sharing excerpts from Williams' memoirs, letters he wrote while in Rome, and the imaginative writings inspired by and created during his time in Italy.

### **Special Events**

**Soul Searching: A Victorian-Style Séance** features historian Melissa Daggett and spiritual medium Juliet Pazera discussing the supernatural rituals popular among 19th-century Creoles followed by a séance at Hermann-Grima Historic House Museum.

**Food Events** will include brunch samples and cocktails at Café Adelaide with John Pope interviewing Ti Adelaide Martin about *Miss Ella of Commander's Palace*, the book she co-wrote with her mother, Ella Brennan.

**Books and Beignets**, the Festival's annual book club event, will focus on Robert Olen Butler's Pulitzer Prize-winning collection of short stories, *A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain*, and include traditional New Orleans coffee and beignets at Muriel's Restaurant.

The Festival will host an event to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closing of **Storyville** featuring **Pamela Arceneaux**, **Sally Asher**, and **Nina Bozak** in a presentation told through history, music, dance, and theater.

The annual **Drummer and Smoke** day of music will once again be on stage at Palm Court Jazz Café on Sunday, March 26, with appearances by **Bruce Sunpie Barnes** and **Roger Dickerson**.

Also during the Festival weekend, **Saints and Sinners Literary Festival (SAS)**, our annual LGBT literary conference now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year, gathers members from the national LGBT literary community. Featured speakers include **Dorothy Allison**, **Kate Carroll de Gutes**, **Greg Herren**, **Felice Picano**, **Martin Pousson**, **J.M. Redmann**, **Jake Shears**, **Drew Nellins Smith**, **Justin Torres**, and many others. Visit [sasfest.org](http://sasfest.org) for more details.

As always, the Festival literally closes with a shout with the **Stanley and Stella Shouting Contest** in Jackson Square.

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; Herman-Grima Historic House; Beauregard-Keyes House; The Jaxson on the River; Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré; Dickie Brennan's Tableau Restaurant; Muriel's Jackson Square Restaurant; Café Adelaide; and Palm Court Jazz Cafe; among others.

**Festival Tickets** will go on sale in January. VIP Passes are \$600; Festival Panel Passes are \$100 (\$70 for students); a One-Day Pass is \$40; theater/special events range from \$10-\$75; master classes are \$25 each or Full Master Class/Panel Pass Series is \$225; the Scholars Conference is \$20; walking tours are \$25. Group rates, available on request, are 20% off for groups of ten 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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