



Loyola University To Host Award-Winning Author and Songwriter Alice Randall at “My Black Country: Songs & Stories” during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week

The “LIVE AT LOYOLA” event also will feature several new faces of Black Country music, including Grace Gibson, Teena May and Leyla McCalla

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NEW ORLEANS – The School of Music and Theatre Professions will celebrate New York Times best-selling author and award-winning songwriter Alice Randall at Loyola’s annual “LIVE AT LOYOLA” concert series March 28 at 3:30 p.m., in the NOEW tent outside the Joseph A. Butt, S.J., College of Business at Loyola.

The event, “My Black Country: Songs & Stories,” will honor Randall’s new book, “My Black Country: A Journey Through Country Music’s Black Past, Present, and Future,” and companion album, “My Black Country – The Songs of Alice Randall.”

In addition, the event will feature conversation and performances by Teena May and Dusky Waters, the founders of Black Americana Fest; Grace Gibson; Leyla McCalla; and, special guests. Journalist Arthel Neville will return as host of the concert series, which is free and open to the public.

Randall’s book is a vivid telling of Black people’s 400-hundred-year history of making country music in America. The companion album – on OH BOY RECORDS, country music star John Prine’s label – features superstars of modern Black Country, including McCalla, a folk musician who played with the Grammy-Award winning string band Carolina Chocolate Drops.

“I’m thrilled to be invited for this conversation and concert at Loyola during NOEW,” Randall said. “There are many little-known New Orleans connections to Black Country, starting with two members of the first family of Black Country, Lil Armstrong and Herb Jeffries, who were catalyzed in their careers by Louis Armstrong. ‘My Black Country’ is a book about erased Black music history and a history of intrepid entrepreneurs.”

Randall is the only Black woman in history to write both a number one country song, Trisha Yearwood’s “XXX’s and OOO’s (An American Girl),” and write the treatment for an Academy of Country Music video of the year, Reba McEntire’s “Is There Life Out There.”

“In a year where Beyonce earned Record of the Year for her country album and New Orleans hosted its first Black Americana Fest, we’re thrilled to honor the history and

future of Black Country music in our city,” said Jonathan McHugh, the Hilton-Baldrige Eminent Scholar/Chair in Music Industry Studies at Loyola. “Partnering with NOEW and the New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University expands the audience for our concert series and also showcases these incredible female entrepreneurs during Women’s History Month.”

The event partners Loyola and New Orleans Entrepreneur Week with the New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane and offers two great events on each campus. It is sponsored by the Gia Maione Prima Foundation Inc. and the Hilton-Baldrige endowment.

The event is the second in the “LIVE AT LOYOLA” concert series. Loyola launched the series in 2024 by celebrating The Dixie Cups’ classic song, “Chapel of Love,” for its 60th anniversary.

About the College of Music and Media

The College of Music and Media is comprised of two schools — the School of Music and Theatre Professions and the School of Communication and Design. Students who choose to study in the college prepare for careers in music, theatre, music industry, design, fine art, filmmaking, strategy, mass media and more.

About New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (“NOEW”)

NOEW 2025, which runs March 24-29, is an annual, weeklong celebration of innovation and entrepreneurship, co-produced by the Center for Entrepreneurship and Community Development and The Idea Village. Spanning venues across New Orleans, NOEW 2025 culminates at the NOEW Summit at Loyola University, featuring dynamic programming designed to empower and connect entrepreneurs across the Gulf South.

About the Gia Maione Prima Foundation (“GMPF”)

The Gia Maione Prima Foundation was established with the assistance of longtime friend and counsel, Anthony J. Sylvester of Sherman Atlas Sylvester & Stamelman, LLP. Gia was the widow of famous jazz musician, singer and composer Louis Prima. Gia had a passion for providing music education and outreach initiatives that were geared toward mentoring and inspiring young people. The GMPF makes donations to tax-exempt organizations that support and encourage an appreciation for American jazz, American popular music and jazz performance, as well as the fine arts. For more information about GMPF, visit www.giamaioneprimafoundation.com.

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