

Vive La France! Presenters

Spring 2018

Bruce “Sunpie” Barnes brings a background in Delta Blues to the New Orleans music scene. This Arkansas native (but with Louisiana roots) picked up Zydeco after moving to New Orleans 30 years ago, and he now plays accordion along with the harmonica, rub board, and piano, among other instruments. By the early 1990s Bruce formed his band *Sunpie and the Louisiana Sunspots*, carrying on in the tradition of such Zydeco luminaries as Clifton Chenier and Rockin’ Dopsie, but with his own unique style of what he calls “Afro-Louisiana” music. Sunpie has recorded six critically acclaimed CD’s. Barnes and his music have appeared in numerous films. Recently, he has toured with Paul Simon and Sting.

Jean Xavier Brager- Prior to joining the faculty of the Department of Languages and Cultures at Loyola University New Orleans, Dr. Brager served as a cultural attaché at the Consulat Général of France in New Orleans, from 2001 to 2005. His research interests include post-colonial and gender studies, fashion history, translation and film. His most recent book - an interdisciplinary study entitled *De l’autre côté de la mer Représentations littéraires, visuelles et cinématographiques de l’identité pied-noir* - was recently published by L’Harmattan, Paris.

A graduate from an acting school in Marseilles, France, Jean Xavier is an actor and director. While his last film credits include his role as François Chalais in *Faith of my Fathers*, he directed the US stage premiere of *Couples*, a comedy translated from a play by Académie Française Danièle Sallenave. In addition to working as a free-lance translator, he volunteers as the artistic director of Francophilia Foundation, a not-for-profit organization the mission of which is to introduce American audiences to French and Francophone language and culture. Dr. Brager is currently working on the Jeanne d’Arc fundraising campaign towards a long-overdue Francophone cultural center in New Orleans.

Bruce Daigrepoint was born in New Orleans but of Cajun heritage. He learned guitar, banjo, piano, and eventually accordion as a young man, and would almost single-handedly popularize Cajun music and dancing in 1980’s New Orleans with his *fais do do* performances at the Maple Leaf bar. His subsequent 30-year run at Tipitina’s made Bruce a staple of the local scene. He has also brought his Louisiana music all over the world. His repertoire includes traditional Cajun mainstays – waltzes and two-steps – in addition to dozens of his own compositions. Bruce’s string of albums, starting with 1987’s *Stir up the Roux*, and including *Coeur des Cajuns* (1989), *Petit Cadeau* (1994), *Paradis* (1999), *Jamais de la Vie* (2013) and his most recent *Bienvenue dans le Sud de la Louisiane* (2016) all attest to his commitment to writing and performing songs in French. Bruce may be rightfully called the King of Cajun Music in New Orleans, where he keeps this genre of music vital and meaningful today.

Emily Ford is a New Orleans-based restoration mason, cemetery preservationist, and historian. Owner and operator of Oak and Laurel Cemetery Preservation, LLC, Ms. Ford has completed dozens of tomb, tablet, and monument restorations in New Orleans and its environs. Her additional work includes research into historic craft and landscapes of historic New Orleans cemeteries, as well as the design and maintenance of a national cemetery vandalism database. Ms. Ford’s work focuses on empowering cemetery stakeholders in the care and preservation of their property. Her website and blog can be found at www.oakandlaurel.com

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Philippe Goudail completed a doctoral dissertation in Economics which focused on biotechnology in North Africa. While living in France, he had the opportunity to attend several wine seminars organized by the Club Français du Vin and was an active participant in the Salon des Vignerons Independants. After moving from Paris to New Orleans in September of 2002, he began working as a wine consultant for a local wine importer and a local distributor. He is a certified Sommelier (Master of Sommelier Course level I and II). He regularly presents seminars on French wines at cultural centers in the area. He currently teaches French and Economics at Mount Carmel Academy.

Sally Reeves received her Master's degree in archival management from the University of New Orleans. She is co-author of the award-winning *New Orleans Architecture* series published over the past thirty years by the Friends of the Cabildo; and is translator and editor of Jacques-Felix Lelièvre's *Nouveau Jardinier de la Louisiane*, published by LSU Press as *Jacques-Felix Lelièvre's New Louisiana Gardener* in 2001. She is a co-author of *Marie Adrien Persac: Louisiana Artist* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2000) and contributed the Persac essay to *A Unique Slant of Light: The Bicentennial History of Art in Louisiana* (Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, 2012). From 2006, when she retired the first time, until 2010, she conducted architectural surveys on behalf of the towns of Mandeville, Madisonville, and Covington in St. Tammany Parish and still has many friends there. She is involved in a number of New Orleans Tricentennial projects, and has an article in *New Orleans and the World*, a project of the LEH; in the catalog to an 2018 Ogden Museum exhibit on José Salazar.

Nora Wetzel is a registered nurse and a certified chef. She blended her professions when she accepted a corporate position as a field and safety manager for an offshore catering company supervising catering operations on oil platforms in the Gulf of Mexico for ten years. She was a founding board member of the New Orleans Chapter of the American Institute of Wine and Food. She has been assigned to various special projects with Julia Child, Robert Mondavi, Chris Keragiorgou, Emeril Lagasse and John Folse. Nora is also a founding board member of the Museum of Southern Food and Beverage in New Orleans. She has been trained in 19th century open hearth Creole cooking & Garde Manger, considered the most demanding station/job in any kitchen. Nora is an American Culinary Federation Lifetime Certified Chef de Cuisine. She is chef/owner of a catering and event planning service. Nora is currently president of the Louisiana Historical Society.