



For Immediate Release

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## Black Cowboy Talks Scheduled in St. Landry, Lafayette Parishes Documentary T-Galop to Be Screened at Cite Des Arts

Lafayette, LA: Black Cowboys played a major role in the settlement of the American West and are a significant part of today's south Louisiana culture. Theodore Foster, PhD and assistant professor of history and African American Studies at Benedictine University in Chicago, will give Black Cowboy Talks in the days leading up to the February 13 performance of *Cross That River*, a concert musical that tells the story of a runaway slave who became a Black Cowboy.

The first Black Cowboy Talk is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on February 1 at the Washington Recreational Center, located at 705 South Bridge St., in Washington, LA. The talks continue at 6 p.m. on February 2 at Maison Freetown, located at 800 E. Vermilion St. in Lafayette. At 1 p.m. on February 4, Foster will speak at the St. Landry Parish Tourist Center, located at 978 Interstate 49 South Service Rd at Exit 23, in Opelousas. These activities are free and open to the public.

At 6 p.m. on Thursday, February 9, PASA will screen T-Galop, Conni Castille's documentary about Cajun and Creole Cowboys at Cite Des Arts, located at 109 Vine St. in downtown Lafayette. This event is also free and open to the public.

"At PASA, we are intent on giving our community insight into what we bring to our stage; to share what happens between the studio and the stage, and to pique—and respond to—the curiosity of our community," says PASA executive director Jacqueline Lyle. "These studio-to-stage activities are free and we love it when our communities respond and turn out."

The project also includes two daytime performances for Lafayette Parish School System students on February 14. Students and teachers receive classroom resources in advance of the performance. PASA's daytime performances for students are supported by a generous grant from Love Our Schools.

The story of a run-away slave named Blue, who fled Louisiana for Texas, is at the heart of *Cross That River*, a musical play which will be performed at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, February 13 at the Heymann Performing Arts Center in Lafayette. *Cross That River* is part of the Performing Arts Serving of Acadiana's (PASA's) 2022-23 season. Tickets are available at the Heymann Performing Arts Center box office and at [www.pasaonline.org](http://www.pasaonline.org).

*Cross That River* takes audiences on a powerful musical journey that represents a significant moment in American history when Black cowboys lived and helped settle the West. It's a story that's not been told before in this way.

In the concert musical, the unsettled West of the 1860s provides a new life and new dreams for Blue, a run-away slave, who escapes from slavery to Texas to become one of America's first Black cowboys. This compelling tale of freedom integrates fiction with historical fact, and each song presents a different page in this complicated chapter of American History.

In addition to national touring, *Cross That River* will launch a four-week Off-Broadway run in September 2023.

Award winning jazz musician Allan Harris, who enjoys a prolific career on the stages of jazz clubs and concert halls around the world, wrote *Cross that River* to tell this untold story of the Black West and to empower all Americans with an inspiring tale of hope and freedom.

The cast of *Cross That River* includes vocalists who portray the roles of the story's characters, a band which includes guitar, violin, keyboard, guitar, bass and drums, creating a rich tapestry onto which the impressive vocalists weave this inspiring story.

The word "river" in literature often suggests an adventure; think of Huckleberry Finn and his journey on the Mississippi. The river in *Cross That River* symbolizes the removal of a slave's chains; to cross that river is to cross from bondage to freedom. Blue's journey is not without its trials and tribulations but his story is ultimately one of hope.

PASA's *Cross That River* project is sponsored by Kinchen Funeral Home and Meritus Credit Union. PASA also received additional support through grants from the Louisiana Division of the Arts and Lafayette Consolidated Government, both administered by the Acadiana Center for the Arts, as well as a grant from the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation.

For more information about *Cross That River* and to find out how you can be a part of the PASA family, contact the PASA office at 337-769-3231 or email [info@pasaonline.org](mailto:info@pasaonline.org)

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Allan Harris—the Brooklyn-born and now Harlem-based vocalist/ guitarist/bandleader/composer--has reigned supreme as one of the most accomplished and exceptional singers of his generation. A natural entertainer, Harris's dynamic stage presence has made him a main-stay in concert halls, theaters, jazz clubs and jazz festivals around the world. He has been called a "protean talent" by the New York Times and has established himself as one of the jazz world's most acclaimed vocalists, with a potent combination of dynamic vocal abilities, impeccable phrasing, and powerful emotional resonance. Heralded by the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Atlantic*, *Glide Magazine*, *Jazz Times*, *DownBeat*, and *Vintage Guitar*, Harris is a real story teller through authentic interpretations of the American Songbook, classic and contemporary jazz, popular standards, blues and originals.

Aptly described by the Miami Herald as an artist blessed with, "the warmth of Tony Bennett, the bite and rhythmic sense of Sinatra, and the sly elegance of Nat 'King' Cole," the ample evidence of Allan Harris's moving and magisterial artistry can be heard on his 14 recordings as a leader; his far-flung and critically-acclaimed concerts around the world, and his numerous awards, which include the New York Nightlife Award for "Outstanding Jazz Vocalist," the Backstage Bistro Award for "Ongoing Achievement in Jazz," the DownBeat Critic's Poll Award for "Rising Star Jazz Vocalist," the Hot House Jazz Magazine "Jazz Vocalist of the Year Award" two years running, and the Harlem Speaks "Jazz Museum of Harlem Award," a Back Stage Bistro award for "Ongoing Achievement in Jazz," and France's Palmares Award in

2019. Harris has received prestigious grants from Chamber Music America, Pathways to Jazz and South Arts. He is a recent winner in the Sarah Vaughan International Vocal Competition.