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John Boutté, singer

“Absolutely my most favorite interview I've ever done.”
Susan Cowsill, singer-songwriter

“Knowledgeable, charming, with interesting questions... even to the interviewee!”
Allen Toussaint, legendary producer

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SHOW DESCRIPTION

Music Inside Out with Gwen Thompkins is a weekly, one-hour radio broadcast featuring the people of Louisiana who've devoted their lives to music. Host Gwen Thompkins and her guests talk extensively about the fire and sweat of the creative process and parse songs that have influenced Louisiana's unusually varied musical landscape.

The standard bearers of Louisiana music are often national icons — from Jelly Roll Morton to Big Freedia, Fats Domino to Tim McGraw, Jerry Lee Lewis to Clifton Chenier, Mahalia Jackson to Trombone Shorty. What makes their music so varied and satisfying is the influence of other cultures — an ongoing dialogue with the rest of the United States and the world.

Each week, *Music Inside Out* showcases unexpected points of cultural connection. Just as Louis Armstrong loved Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and played an aria from that opera every day — contemporary Louisiana artists live with their ears wide open.

That's why their music attracts fans from around the planet. And that's why listeners tune into *Music Inside Out* each week. They want us to grab them by the ears.

WHAT LISTENERS ARE SAYING

“The interviews are deep, rich, and feel spontaneous. I look forward to hearing your program every week.” Valerie Jean Capitanich

“I've liked your program. But I fell in love with you with the Irma Thomas interview.” Wilson Johns

“Wow! Fantastic. @MusicInsideOut celebrating the legacy of Professor Longhair. Martin Craig

Man! Another great episode of @MusicInsideOut “Songs for the Soul.” Josh Daly

LINKS TO RECENT HOURS

[Irma Thomas](#)

[Allen Toussaint](#)

[Deacon John](#)

[Don Vappie](#)

[Givonna Joseph](#)

[Susan Cowsill](#)

[Sonny Landreth](#)

[Jim McCormick](#)



GWEN'S STORY

Gwen Thompkins is a veteran correspondent and editor for National Public Radio. She was NPR's East Africa Bureau Chief — based in Nairobi, Kenya — and senior editor of NPR's *Weekend Edition with Scott Simon*. Thompkins was born and raised in New Orleans and worked early on as a reporter and editor at the *Times-Picayune* newspaper. She spent the 2010-2011 academic year as a fellow at the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University.

Throughout her career, Thompkins consistently has shaped stories to music and vice versa. She reported a critically acclaimed, music-rich NPR series on New Orleans in the weeks following Hurricane Katrina. She's also reported on secret wedding night dances in Sudan, musical testimonials to crimes against humanity in Northern Uganda, and East Africa's fascination with Dolly Parton.

Thompkins remains a contributing writer for NPR and files musical stories and essays from New Orleans. Personally, she's never quite evolved from making mix tapes, playlists, and connections with a wide variety of artists. Her interviews teem with humor, curiosity, and creativity.

REACTIONS FROM GUESTS

“Knowledgable, charming, with interesting questions thus making an interview interesting even to the interviewee! An inner sincerity and pleasantness that radiates. Sounds too good to be true? Well, it's how I would describe the beautiful Lady Gwendolyn Thompkins.” **Allen Toussaint**

“I enjoyed the interview and had fun talking to Gwen. I think I surprised her with some of my answers!” **Irma Thomas**

“I'm as proud of our conversation as I am of the best songs I've ever written.” **Jim McCormick**

“Gwen is an incredibly talented interviewer. She made me so comfortable, I forgot I was being recorded. Then I completely forgot what I talked about. I even had a few nights of worrying if I may have said too much. Thankfully, she made it sound great. I sat, listened, and cried a little myself to be honest. All the stories were true.” **John Boutté**

“Gwen Thompkins has raised the bar. Her unique combination of wit and insight made for one of the most fun and thought-provoking interviews I've ever done.” **Sonny Landreth**