

"I am Freedia, I represent bounce"

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Adding a unique New Orleans flavor to a week at Tulane University celebrating black artistic expression, homegrown performer Big Freedia came to campus on Wednesday (Feb. 19) for a compelling discussion on the intersection of black arts, cultural appropriation and gender and sexuality.



"First of all, I am human. I don't get offended, call me what you want. I am Freedia, I represent bounce, I represent history," says Big Freedia, left, in a conversation with Marc Perry, an assistant professor of anthropology, on the Tulane uptown campus. (Photo by Ryan Rivet)

Recently, Big Freedia has gone from a local New Orleans phenomenon to a well-known figure as the star of Fuse TV's ["Big Freedia: Queen of Bounce,"](#) a reality series detailing her rise to national fame.

Last September, Freedia led a group of more than 300 dancers to set a Guinness World Record for "Most People Twerking Simultaneously."

Big Freedia noted the rise in popularity was not a matter of coincidence.

"After Hurricane Katrina bounce music spread like an infection â?| When we were displaced from Katrina it spread all over the world, we started making it go viral.

People would ask what is that music? That's New Orleans, baby,” Big Freedia said.

Marc Perry, an assistant professor of anthropology, led the conversation with Big Freedia for a community audience at McAllister Auditorium. Big Freedia identifies as a gay man, yet uses feminine pronouns when performing.

Following the discussion, a few lucky attendees had the chance to attend a Bounce “twerkshop” hosted by Big Freedia, where the performer put her teaching skills into practice with demonstrations by her dancers.

Senior Madeline Kaplow was taken with the performer's skills and style.

“Big Freedia is really inspirational,” Kaplow said. “She has completely transformed bounce music internationally and has made a name for herself despite her differences. It makes me proud to live in New Orleans, and I'm impressed by her strength, courage and talent.”

The [Black Arts Festival](#) this week is sponsored by the Black Student Union, Center for Engaged Learning and Teaching, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Newcomb College Institute, Newcomb-Tulane College, and TUCP Direction.

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