

MARCH 22, 2017



PICK OF THE WEEK MUSIC

## HEART AND SOUL

PHARMACIST-TURNED-MUSICIAN LOAH'S STIRRING SONGS REFLECT HER DIVERSE ROOTS

As an Irish–Sierra Leonean, singer-songwriter Sallay Garnett, who performs as **Loah**, is a conduit between two cultures. On her single “Cortège,” she sings in Mende and Sherbro, the language of her grandfather’s tribe, but the harmonies feel akin to ancient Gaelic chanting. Inspired by Malian singer Oumou Sangaré, who urged female musicians of the African diaspora to reflect both their heritage and what they’ve experienced abroad, Loah abandoned her career as a pharmacist to pursue performing in earnest. Soulful, haunting songs like “The Bailey,” performed with string-ensemble backing, and “Take It,” a collaboration with Irish producer Bantum, explore personal autonomy. She also co-wrote “Someone New” with Hozier for his debut. Building a reverent following in Ireland over the last two years, Loah’s finally set to release her debut EP, *This Heart*, in the springtime. She’ll celebrate by bringing a full band to the Irish Arts Center, where she had her first U.S. performances last April. LINDSEY RHOADES

At 8, Irish Arts Center, 553 West 51st Street, 866-811-4111, [irishartscenter.org](http://irishartscenter.org), \$24

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