

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Wednesday, August 3, 2011

The Vibrant Voices of Ontario Tent Shines a Spotlight on Ontario Authors and Publishers

Supported by the Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC), this venue is dedicated to featuring original works from emerging and established authors that represent the quality and diversity of literature being produced in Ontario.

What: Vibrant Voices of Ontario Tent at The Word On The Street Toronto Festival, sponsored by OMDC

When: Festival day is Sunday, Sept. 25, 2011 from 11:00 until 6:00

Where: Queen's Park in Downtown Toronto

Details: Featuring readings, panel discussions, interviews, and audience Q&A sessions by a vast array of authors, including Tony Burgess, Debora Ellis, Olive Senior, Antanas Sileika, and Cordelia Strube.

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Toronto as Muse: Books Inspired by the City We Love

- ***The Many Revenges of Kip Flynn*** by Sean Dixon, published by Coach House Books – It all started with a black rose and a rich young man. And then there she was, Kip Flynn, standing beside her dead boyfriend and agreeing to take a large sum of money from the young man's father to keep quiet. As if she could have done anything else, being so scared and grief-stricken and maybe pregnant... **Sean Dixon** is a playwright, novelist and actor. Sean's first novel, *The Girls Who Saw Everything*, was named one of the Best Books of 2007 by *Quill & Quire* magazine. He is the author of two books for young readers, *The Feathered Cloak* and *The Winter Drey*.
- ***Six Metres of Pavement*** by Farzana Doctor, published by Dundurn Press – Ismail Boxwala made the worst mistake of his life one summer morning 20 years ago: he forgot his baby daughter in the back seat of his car. After his daughter's tragic death, he struggles to continue living, but Ismail's story begins to change after he reluctantly befriends two women: Fatima, a young queer activist kicked out of her parents' home; and Celia, his grieving Portuguese-Canadian neighbour who lives just six metres away... **Farzana Doctor** is a Toronto-based author and the 2011 recipient of the Writers' Trust of Canada's Dayne Ogilvie Grant for an emerging gay Canadian author. Her first novel, *Stealing Nasreen*, received critical acclaim and earned a devoted readership upon its release in 2007.
- ***Passing Through*** by David Penhale, published by Cormorant Books – Toronto is not a place Daniel Foster wants to be for very long. If not for his daughter Mary being in financial trouble, he would not be here at all. But when the bank that holds his million dollars in savings crashes, he realizes he will be stuck in Toronto for much longer than he expected. Forced to move in with Mary and her daughter, Foster must relearn everything he thought he knew: job skills, parenting, even how to love again... **David Penhale** is a published poet. He spent several years in Dubai, and honed his first novel, *Passing Through*, at writing workshops at the University of Iowa.
- ***The Girl On The Escalator*** by Jim Nason, published by Tightrope Books – Inspired by everyday people riding the TTC, *The Girl on the Escalator* is a collection of gender and expectation-bending stories that reveal the extraordinary and often heartbreaking truths behind ordinary life... **Jim Nason's** award-winning poems and stories have appeared in literary journals and anthologies

across the United States and Canada. He has published two books of poetry: *If Lips Were as Red* and *The Fist of Remembering*; a third collection, *Narcissus Unfolding*, is forthcoming. His debut novel, *The Housekeeping Journals*, was released to critical acclaim in 2007.

12:00 noon – 12:15 p.m.

Catherine Graham presents *Winterkill*
Poetry, Insomniac Press

Winterkill represents the mature culmination of a trilogy of work by one of Canada's most skilled young poets. Each small treasure repays numerous visits, revealing something new with each reading. **Catherine Graham** is the author of three critically acclaimed collections of poetry. Vice-President of Project Bookmark Canada and Marketing Coordinator for the Rowers Pub Reading Series, she teaches creative writing at the University of Toronto.

12:15 – 12:30 p.m.

Sam Cheuk presents *Love Figures*
Poetry, Insomniac Press

Borrowing disparate ideas and modes ranging from self-censorship and identity performance, lyric poetry and phenomenology, Sam Cheuk's debut poetry collection attempts to invent a new way of truth-telling. **Sam Cheuk** holds an MFA from New York University. He divides his time between Toronto, Vancouver and Hong Kong.

12:30 – 1:00 p.m.

Olive Senior presents *Dancing Lessons*
Fiction, Cormorant Books

When her house in the Jamaican countryside is damaged by a hurricane, Gertrude Samphire is sent by her estranged daughter Celia to an assisted living centre, where she spends most of her time alone. It is only through writing that she finds her voice, and she begins to record her life in a notebook: memories of her gothic childhood, impetuous marriage, and struggles with raising a family. Gertrude slowly comes out of her shell, and comes to realize she may not be as alone as she once felt. **Olive Senior** is the prize-winning author of a dozen books of fiction, poetry and non-fiction. Her short story collection *Summer Lightning* won the inaugural Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book. Born in Jamaica, she has travelled widely and now spends most of her time in Jamaica and Toronto.

1:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Deborah Ellis presents *No Ordinary Day*
Young Adult Fiction, Groundwood Books

Young Valli, living on the streets of Kolkata, India, comes smack up against the ancient disease of leprosy, and has to learn to trust others as much as she trusts herself. **Deborah Ellis** is partnering with The Leprosy Mission on this book. Join her to find out how we can all Make Leprosy History. Best known for her Breadwinner Trilogy, set in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the trilogy has been published in 17 countries and has raised more than one million dollars in royalties for Canadian Women, for Women in Afghanistan and Street Kids International. She recently received the Ontario Library Association's President's Award for Exceptional Achievement, and she has also been named to the Order of Ontario. This fall, Deborah Ellis is also launching *True Blue*, a tale of murder and friendship in a small town summer camp.

1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Trillium Book Award Voices: The Writing Life in Ontario

A selection of winners of the Trillium Book Award over the past 24 years will gather to discuss and share their individual perspectives on the writing process in Ontario, providing fresh and local insight on such things as their favourite places to write, where they get their inspiration, along with tips on how to connect and do research. The Ontario government established the **Trillium Book Award** in 1987 to recognize the literary excellence and diversity of Ontario writers and writing. This prestigious Award is unusual because it allows entries from all genres. Over the years it has grown in stature. With the upcoming 25th anniversary, the **Trillium Book Award** is among the most highly regarded national and international literary prizes.

2:30 – 3:00 p.m.

Antanas Sileika presents *Underground*

Fiction, Thomas Allen Publishers

Inspired by true historical revelations and fragments of the author's family history, *Underground* tells the story of a troubled romance between Lukas and Elena, two members of the underground Lithuanian resistance movement in the mid-1940s. **Antanas Sileika** is the author of two novels and one collection of linked short stories, *Buying On Time*, which was nominated for both the City of Toronto Book Award and the Stephen Leacock Award for Humour. His last novel, *Woman in Bronze*, was a *Globe and Mail* Best Book selection. He lives in Toronto, where he is the artistic director for the Humber School for Writers.

3:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Douglas Gibson presents *Stories about Storytellers: Publishing Alice Munro, Robertson Davies, Alistair MacLeod, Pierre Trudeau, and Others*

Memoir, ECW Press

"I'll kill him!" said Mavis Gallant. Pierre Trudeau almost did, leading him into a whizzing stream of traffic that almost crushed both of them. Alistair MacLeod accused him of a "home invasion" to grab the manuscript of *No Great Mischief*. And Paul Martin denounced him to a laughing Ottawa crowd, saying, "If Shakespeare had had Doug Gibson as an editor, there would be no Shakespeare!" *Stories About Storytellers* shares these tales and many more, as readers follow Doug Gibson through 40 years of editing and publishing some of Canada's sharpest minds and greatest storytellers. **Douglas Gibson** worked as an editor and publisher from 1968 until he retired from McClelland & Stewart in 2009. His Douglas Gibson Books was Canada's first editorial imprint and lives on.

3:30 – 3:45 p.m.

Cornelia Hoogland presents *Woods Wolf Girl*

Poetry, Wolsak and Wynn Publishers

Wolves, woodsmen and tangled woods merge in this lush Canadian adaptation the story of Little Red Riding Hood. A meditation on innocence and its loss, and on the power of the green wilderness, *Woods Wolf Girl* uses striking lyric poetry to expose the heart of the original fairy tale. **Cornelia Hoogland** has published five poetry collections. Her poetry has been published internationally and has been short-listed for the CBC Literary Awards on multiple occasions. Hoogland is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario.

3:45 – 4:15 p.m.

Christopher Heard presents *The Suite Life: The Magic and Mystery of Hotel Living*

Non-Fiction/Travel, Dundurn Press

Hotel living has always seemed exotic. Why did Claude Monet, Greta Garbo, Coco Chanel, and many other mercurial individuals desire such a life? Besides answering that question, *The Suite Life* features interviews with high-profile celebrities, such as Johnny Depp, who have also chosen hotel living. *The Suite Life* is the culmination of a lifelong fascination with iconic hotels and those who have opted to reside in them. Author **Christopher Heard** was conceived in the Fairmont Royal York Hotel and now lives there as the writer-in-residence. He has published several biographies during his 13 years as a TV interviewer and film reviewer. Heard currently co-hosts the radio travel show *Planes, Trains and Automobiles* and contributes weekly pop culture commentary to the radio show *Toronto Weekend*.

4:15 - 4:30 p.m.

Dane Swan presents *Bending the Continuum*
Poetry, Guernica Editions

The poems in *Bending the Continuum* are slave to no genre. Science-fiction, alternative realities, and time are fluid. Form, voice and space in this collection borrow from multiple canons. Dane's first book is equal parts Can-lit, Harlem Renaissance, the Caribbean oral tradition known as Griotism, Roddenberry, hip-hop and dark-humour. Born and raised in Bermuda to a Bermudian father and Jamaican mother, for **Dane Swan**, visiting family involved trips to small villages in Jamaica. The great story-tellers he heard in these communities were his only literary professors. At 17, Dane moved to Canada with his brother to further their education. *Bending the Continuum* is his first full-length collection of poetry in print.

4:30 – 5:15 p.m.

Larger Than Life: How Quirky Characters Give Us A New View of the World: Join **Cordelia Strube**, **Bonnie Bowman** and **Kristen den Hartog** as they discuss how 'big' characters can reveal small truths.

- **Lemon** by **Cordelia Strube**, published by Coach House Books – Lemon just can't be bothered trying to fit in. She spurns fashion, television, and even the mall. High school is misery, a trial run for an unhappy adulthood of bloated waistlines, bad sex, and inequities, and nothing her guidance counsellor can say will convince Lemon otherwise. *Lemon* was shortlisted for the 2010 Trillium Book Award and longlisted for the 2010 Scotiabank Giller Prize.
- **Spaz** by **Bonnie Bowman**, published by Anvil Press – Walter Finch is the manager of a shoe store in his local mall. He finds the store an ideal environment in which to pursue his grand ambition: designing the perfect woman's shoe. As he delves further into his passion, Walter comes to believe that his path will ultimately lead him to the perfect foot to fit his creation. On an all-consuming mission to find his princess, Walter is plunged into a separate reality, his own fairytale.
- **And Me Among Them** by **Kristen den Hartog**, published by Freehand Books – Ruth grew too fast. A young girl over seven feet tall, she struggles to conceal the physical and mental symptoms of her rapid growth, and to connect with other children. Not knowing how to help Ruth, her parents turn inward, away from one another. Ruth is not precocious, nor a prodigy, but her extraordinary size affords her extraordinary vision. Possessing an uncanny ability to intuit the emotional secrets of her family's past and present, Ruth gently surfaces her parents' vulnerabilities, their regrets and their deepest longings.

5:15 – 5:45 p.m.

Tony Burgess presents *Idaho Winter*
Fiction, ECW Press

In *Idaho Winter*, the young title character is tormented by all who know him. When Idaho discovers that his miserable life is the creation of a cruel writer, he locks the author in a closet and takes control of the narrative. When the author emerges from the closet, he finds his story completely unrecognizable... **Tony Burgess** writes long and short fiction and screenplays. He was recently nominated for a Genie for his

screen adaptation of his second book, *Pontypool Changes Everything*. He is also the author of *People Live Still In Cashtown Corners*, *Ravenna Gets*, *The Hellmouths of Bewdley*, and *Fiction for Lovers*, among others.

About the Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC)

The OMDC, an agency of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, is the central catalyst for the province's cultural media cluster including the book publishing, film and television, interactive digital media, magazine publishing and music industries.

About The Word On The Street:

Every year on the last Sunday in September, in the cities of Vancouver, Saskatoon, Kitchener, Toronto, and Halifax, The Word On The Street festivals unite the country in a national celebration of literacy and the written word. Annually attracting over 200,000 visitors to its Queen's Park location, The Word On The Street Toronto is the largest book and magazine festival in Canada.

– 30 –

For More Information please contact:

Media Contact:

June Dickenson, Public Relations Manager
P: 647.477.6000 E: junedickenson@cogeco.ca

Festival Director

Nicola Dufficy
T: 416.504.7241

Please visit the festival's official website at www.thewordonthestreet.ca. Read our blog, become a fan on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.