

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:Tuesday, July 19, 2011

**This Is Not The Shakespeare Stage: To be launched at The Word On The Street Toronto this September**  
*Canada's largest book and magazine festival announces the winning name for its new stage aimed at 13 – 30 year-olds and the exciting programming that will be featured there.*

**What:** This Is Not The Shakespeare Stage at The Word On The Street Toronto Festival

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

**Where:** Queen's Park in Downtown Toronto

**Details:** The new stage features hourly, genre-based, interactive programming sessions showcasing great Canadian young-adult books, authors, and artists *plus* the all-new Open Mic Hour. This exciting new stage breaks festival boundaries to truly explore and celebrate the spoken and written word, and bring a fresh, fun, and youthful perspective to the festival.

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**HIGHLIGHTS:**

The This Is Not The Shakespeare Stage will feature a huge line-up of Canadian talent including **Lesley Livingston, Holly Luhning, Norah McClintock, Shane Peacock, Robert J. Sawyer,** and many more!

**Open Mic Hour:** Earlier this year, submissions were accepted from young adults aged 13 – 19. The Word On The Street Toronto is pleased to announce the names of the selected writers, in the following literary genres:

- Poetry: **Leigh Cavanaugh**, age 20
- Poetry: **Alice Gauntley**, age 17
- Poetry: **Timothy Keslick**, age 18
- Short Story: **Robert Adragna**, age 13
- Short Story: **Habiba Cooper Diallo**, age 15
- Slam Poetry: **Rebecca Carew**, age 18
- Slam Poetry: **Claudia Oriano**, age 17
- Spoken Word: **Osama Siddique**, age 16

**PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE:****11:45-12:00 – Toronto Poetry Project – Spoken Word Poetry**

**Eytan Crouton 1st Disciple** has been writing and performing Hip Hop since July 2009. He was recently a finalist at the Canadian Individual Poetry Slam in Vancouver representing Toronto Poetry Slam (TPS). He has also just become the 2011 Toronto Poetry Slam Grand Champion and is a current member of the 2011-2012 TPS team. He is a member of Toronto Sketch Comedy Troupe "The Boom" and in 2004 was a runner up in the Toronto Star Short Story Contest.

**12:00-12:45 – Mastering the Mystery – How to Keep Readers Guessing**

How do mystery authors ensure that their book is a page-turner? How do they keep us guessing, without compromising the integrity of their characters and the depth of the plot? What are the elements of a great mystery? Join authors **Norah McClintock, Evan Munday, and Shane Peacock** for a discussion of these topics and more!

**Norah McClintock** is a five-time winner of the Crime Writers of Canada's Arthur Ellis Award for Best Juvenile Crime Novel. Although Norah is a freelance editor, she still manages to write at least one novel a year. Norah grew up in Montreal, Quebec, and now lives with her family in Toronto, Ontario. *She Said/She Saw* is her eleventh book with Orca.

**Evan Munday** is the illustrator of the novel *Stripmalling*, written by Jon Paul Fiorentino (ECW Press), and is the cartoonist behind the self-published comic book, *Quarter-Life Crisis*, set in a post-apocalyptic Toronto. He works as a book publicist for Coach House Books. *The Dead Kid Detective Agency* is Evan's first novel and features his own illustrations.

**Shane Peacock** has received many honours for his writing, including the prestigious Arthur Ellis Award for *Eye of the Crow* and the Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction for *Vanishing Girl*. *The Dragon Turn* is his latest title in *The Boy Sherlock Holmes* series.

### **12:45-1:45 – Open Mic Hour, hosted by Kelley Armstrong**

The spotlight is ready, are you? This year we are hosting our first ever Open Mic programming hour! In May we began accepting submissions from writers aged 13-19 wanting to showcase their work at the festival. From those submissions, we have selected seven bright new voices to perform short readings of their work. Those selected to present their written works are: Robert Adragna, age 13 (Short Story); Rebecca Carew, age 18 (Slam Poetry); Leigh Cavanaugh, age 20 (Poetry); Habiba Cooper Diallo, age 15 (Short Story); Alice Gauntley, age 17 (Poetry); Timothy Keslick, age 18 (Poetry); Claudia Oriano, age 17 (Slam Poetry); Osama Siddique, age 16 (Spoken Word).

### **1:45-2:00 – Toronto Poetry Project – Spoken Word Poetry**

**David Silverberg** is the host and artistic director of Toronto Poetry Slam. His most recent book of poetry is *Bags of Wires* (LyricalMyrical) and he edited Canada's first spoken word anthology, *Mic Check* (Quattro Press). He has performed in cities across Canada, including Calgary, Halifax, Vancouver, Ottawa, London and Montreal. His mom is particularly proud of his gig at a TEDx event in Toronto. He likes egg nog and funk music and John Irving books. Find him at [www.torontopoetryslam.com](http://www.torontopoetryslam.com)

### **2:00-2:30 – Cast(ing) of Characters, with horror fiction author Holly Luhnig**

Do you choose your characters or do your characters choose you? **Holly Luhnig** discusses the often surprising process (including wigs, outfits, field trips) of creating and getting to know the characters from her book *Quiver*, a novel inspired by the legend of sixteenth-century "Blood Countess" Elizabeth Bathory. In sixteenth-century Hungary, Countess Elizabeth Bathory tortured and killed over 600 servant girls in order to bathe in their blood. She believed this practice would keep her skin youthful and her beauty immortal. *Quiver* is a decadent novel that explores this historical figure, and reimagines the story through the eyes of Danica, a young forensic psychologist. Holly Luhnig holds a PhD, specializing in eighteenth-century literature, madness, and theories of the body. Her poetry and academic writing has appeared on radio, and in journals and anthologies. She has received a Saskatchewan Lieutenant-Governor's Arts Award and her collection of poetry, *Sway*, was nominated for a Saskatchewan Book Award.

### **2:30-3:30 – How To Create Your Own Comic**

*Kill Shakespeare* co-creators **Anthony Del Col** and **Conor McCreery**, as well as series artist **Andy Belanger**, demonstrate how a comic is put together from the earliest stages of writing (the beat sheet) through the art process (penciling, inking, colouring) to the final production elements (lettering). The three entrepreneurs will also give tips on how to launch your own entertainment project.

**Anthony Del Col** (Co-Creator) has worked in the music, film and television industries, produced two independent feature films and most recently assisted with the management of international pop star Nelly Furtado and her world tour.

**Conor McCreery** (Co-Creator) has served in both creative and business positions for film and television companies, contributed over 1,000 stories and articles for media outlets and also provided expert analysis for Canada's Business News Network.

**Andy B.** (Artist) works out of the Toronto-based Royal Academy of Illustration & Design and has done work for comic book publishers D.C. Wildstorm, Devil's Due, and Boom! He is the creator of Zuda Comics' "Bottle of Awesome". *Kill Shakespeare* is an epic adventure story that takes all of the Bard's greatest heroes (Hamlet, Juliet, Othello, Falstaff) and pits them against his most menacing villains (Richard III, Lady Macbeth, Iago) on a quest to find and kill a reclusive wizard named William Shakespeare. This award-winning dark take on the Bard has won fans as diverse as Tom Stoppard (*Shakespeare in Love*), Des McAnuff (Artistic Director, The Stratford Shakespeare Festival) and Paul Gross (*Slings and Arrows*).

**3:30-4:30 – That's What She Said –** Four writers. One hour. Four great reads to tantalize teenage readers.

- **Something Wicked by Lesley Anne Cowan**

In **Lesley Anne Cowan's** *Something Wicked*, sixteen-year-old Melissa's most recent troubles stem from a secret: her twenty-eight-year-old boyfriend, Michael, has just broken up with her. Even though the relationship is clearly over, Melissa clings to the past, riding a never-ending wave of hope and disappointment. Meaningless sexual escapades, drunken nights, and drug-induced blackouts help her deal with heartbreak, but her pain goes much deeper than her failed relationship. So when the cracks in her life threaten to tear her apart, Melissa has to decide whether to keep fighting—or to let go.

- **Haunting Violet by Alyxandra Harvey**

Violet Willoughby doesn't believe in ghosts. But they believe in her. After spending years participating in her mother's elaborate ruse as a fraudulent medium, Violet is about as skeptical as they come in all matters supernatural. Now that she is being visited by a very persistent ghost, one who suffered a violent death, Violet can no longer ignore her unique ability. **Alyxandra Harvey** escorts readers into Victorian spiritualist society, where ghosts wear corsets beneath their tea gowns, a forbidden romance breaks all the rules of etiquette, and a reluctant medium gets pulled into a murder mystery that threatens her own future.

- **Beyond Blonde by Teresa Toten**

In *Beyond Blonde*, **Teresa Toten's** third book in this acclaimed series, we discover that Sophie's world has exploded. Papa has left to try and get sober, and her first love, Luke, has left to marry the mother of his baby. Mama is functioning on auto-pilot, and even Sophie's refuge in basketball is threatened, since the new assistant coach, David Wayne, seems to hate the sight of her. Life is further complicated by her sixteen-year-old body betraying her at every turn. Into this confusing breach step Sophie's brilliant Blondes and the ever-audacious Aunties, helping her to battle back with heart and humour.

- **Roll With It by Heather J. Wood**

Figure skater turned roller derby girl Neddy will bowl you over in **Heather J. Wood's** uplifting new book about growing up and deciding for yourself. Neddy rejects the sacrifices necessary to succeed as a figure skater—early mornings, a diet of apples and celery, and the pressure to perform—in favour of the rough and tumble adventures and feisty camaraderie of the roller derby community. In *Roll With It*, Neddy embarks on her first year of university, considers her guilt about not following in her mother's footsteps, navigates a new love, and discovers who she really is and what she really wants.

**4:30-4:45 – Toronto Poetry Project – Spoken Word Poetry**

A member of the Toronto Poetry Slam Team from 2003-2009, **Amanda Hiebert** has been featured in over 200 literary events throughout North America, most recently opening for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Her poetry has been published in numerous magazines and anthologies, and is also a published playwright through the Playwrights Guild of Canada. *The Toronto Star's* review notes, "Amanda reads like Goldie Hawn by way of Simone de Beauvoir out of *Thelma and Louise*." She is currently the slam master with Toronto Poetry Project.

**4:45-5:15 – Reading and Writing Dystopian Fiction, with Catherine Austen**

*The Hunger Games* meets *The Giver* in Catherine Austen's latest book *All Good Children*. Join the author for a presentation of this hot new title, and hear her thoughts on reading and writing dystopian fiction. In *All Good Children*, Creativity is a crime Max commits every day. It's the middle of the twenty-first century and

the elite children of New Middletown are lined up to receive a treatment that turns them into obedient, well-mannered citizens. Maxwell Connors, a seventeen-year-old prankster, misfit and graffiti artist, observes the changes with growing concern, especially when his younger sister, Ally, is targeted. Max and his best friend, Dallas, escape the treatment, but must pretend to be "zombies" while they watch their freedoms and hopes decay. When Max's family decides to take Dallas with them into the unknown world beyond New Middletown's borders, Max's creativity becomes an unexpected bonus rather than a liability. **Catherine Austen** was raised in Kingston, Ontario, the youngest of five children. While procrastinating in the face of deadlines, she began writing children's fiction. Catherine writes from her home in Quebec, which she shares with her husband, Geoff, and their children, Sawyer and Daimon.

**5:15-5:45**

#### **When Fantasy meets Science Fiction – Author Chat**

Join fantasy writer **Lesley Livingston** and science-fiction writer **Robert J. Sawyer** for readings from and a discussion about their new books, *Once Every Never* and *Wonder*. Lesley's time-travel fantasy novel involves a Druid curse, and Rob's science-fiction tale has a blind teenager girl exploring cyberspace. Lesley Livingston is a writer and actor living in Toronto, Canada. Captivated at a young age by stories of mythology and folk lore, past civilizations, and legendary heroes, she developed into a full-fledged Celtic Mythology Geek, steeped in stories of the Otherworld, Faeries and King Arthur. Robert J. Sawyer is the only Canadian and one of eight writers in history to win all three top science-fiction writing honours for best novel of the year: The Hugo Award, The Nebula Award and the John W. Campbell Memorial Award. In addition, he's won an Arthur Ellis Award from the Crime Writers of Canada as well as eleven Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Awards ("Auroras").

#### **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.

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Please visit the festival's official website at [www.thewordonthestreet.ca](http://www.thewordonthestreet.ca). Read our blog, become a fan on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.