



Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador

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MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

VISITING AUTHOR SERIES DELIVERS:

Impressive Fall Line-up of Writers coming to the Rock

September 8, 2015 Celebrated Canadian authors Sean Michaels, Marina Endicott, and Barry Dempster headline the 2015 Visiting Author Series presented by the Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador (WANL) in partnership with Grenfell Campus.

For the series, WANL asks three prominent local writers for their wish list of authors to give public readings in Newfoundland. This year, Elisabeth de Mariaffi invited Sean Michaels from Quebec, Leslie Vryenhoek invited Marina Endicott from Manitoba, and Don McKay invited Barry Dempster from Ontario.

Endicott (who was an actor and director in theatre before embarking on a second successful career as a fiction writer) starts the series with readings from her latest novel *Close to Hugh* on September 17 in Corner Brook (Grenfell's Arts and Science Atrium at 8 PM), and on September 20 in St. John's (Cox & Palmer Second Space at 8 PM).

Music critic-cum-author Michaels will read from his 2014 Giller Prize novel *Us Conductors* on October 1 in Corner Brook (Swirsky's at 8 PM), October 3 in Port Rexton (Fishers Loft Inn at 6 PM), and October 4 in St. John's (Ship Pub at 8 PM).

Highly regarded poet and novelist Barry Dempster concludes the series reading October 21 in St. John's (Eastern Edge Gallery at 8 PM.), and October 26 in Corner Brook (Swirsky's at 8 PM).

“Word about the Newfoundland landscape, both natural and literary, gets around,” says WANL executive director Alison Dyer. “All three authors jumped at the opportunity to come here and give public readings.” Hosted by WANL in St. John’s, Grenfell Campus in Corner Brook and, for the first time, the Fisher’s Loft in Port Rexton, the series is made possible by funding from the Canada Council for the Arts. The readings are open to the public and admission is free.

Since 2003, **Marina Endicott** has published five critically acclaimed books. Her first, *Open Arms*, was short-listed for the Amazon First Novel award and serialized on CBC Radio. *Good to a Fault* was a 2008 Scotiabank Giller Prize finalist, a CBC’s Canada Reads book, and won the 2009 Commonwealth Writers’ Prize. *The Little Shadows*, was long-listed for the Giller and short-listed for the Governor General’s fiction award. Her new novel, *Close to Hugh*, was released in May 2015. Marina teaches creative writing at the Banff Centre for the Arts and at the University of Alberta.

Sean Michaels was born in Stirling, Scotland, in 1982. Raised in Ottawa, he eventually settled in Montreal, founding *Said the Gramophone*, one of the earliest music blogs. He has since spent time in Edinburgh and Kraków, written for the *Guardian* and *McSweeney’s*, toured with rock bands, searched the Parisian catacombs for Les UX, and received two National Magazine Awards. In 2014 his first novel, *Us Conductors* (Penguin Random House Canada), won the Scotiabank Giller Prize and the QWF Paragraphe Hugh MacLennan Prize for Fiction, and was a finalist for the QWF Concordia University First Book Prize and the inaugural Kirkus Prize for Fiction.

Barry Dempster, twice nominated for a Governor General’s Award, is the author of fifteen collections of poetry, two volumes of short stories, two novels, and a children’s book. He won the Canadian Authors Association Chalmers Award for Poetry in 2005 for his book *The Burning Alphabet*. In 2010, he was a finalist for the Ontario Premiers Award for Excellence in the Arts. Most recently, he was nominated for the 2014 Trillium Award for his second novel, *The Outside World*. He’s presently acquisitions editor for Brick Books and lives in Holland Landing, Ontario.

Leslie Vryenhoek’s first novel, *Ledger of the Open Hand*, examines the accumulation of debt in relationships and how we balance our emotional books. Leslie is also the acclaimed author of *Scrabble Lessons* (fiction) and *Gulf* (poetry). As a communications professional, her career has focused on international development, emergency response and the arts. Based in St. John’s, she is also the founding director of Piper’s Frith: Writing at Kilmory.

Don McKay has published numerous books of poetry and several books of essays. The poetry has been recognized with a number of awards, including two Governor General's Awards and the Griffin Poetry Prize. His most recent book of essays, *The Shell of the Tortoise*, received the Winterset Prize for Excellence in Newfoundland and Labrador Writing for 2011. *Paradoxides*, his most recent book of poems, winner of the E.J. Pratt Prize for Poetry, includes meditations on geology and deep time, while pursuing ongoing obsessions with birds and tools. He lives in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Elisabeth de Mariaffi is the author of a brand new novel, *The Devil You Know* (HarperCollins, Canada; Simon & Schuster, USA 2015) as well as a book of short stories, the Giller-nominated *How To Get Along With Women* (Invisible Publishing, 2012). Her poetry and short fiction have been widely published in magazines across Canada. In 2013, her story "Kiss Me Like I'm the Last Man on Earth" was shortlisted for a National Magazine Award. Elisabeth now makes her home in St. John's, Newfoundland, where she lives with the poet George Murray, their combined four children and a border collie — making them CanLit's answer to the Brady Bunch.

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nurturing local writers and writing, and promoting the development of the provincial literary industry.