

**EMBARGOED UNTIL
THURSDAY 11 JUNE 2009**

BOOK FESTIVAL OFFERS A FEAST OF TALENT

The Edinburgh International Book Festival today launched a packed programme conceived by Festival Director, Catherine Lockerbie. The Festival will bring writers, poets, thinkers, politicians, photographers and artists from 45 different countries to debate, discuss, argue and inspire from 15 to 31 August in the wonderful setting of Charlotte Square Gardens in the historic heart of Edinburgh, the world's first UNESCO City of Literature.

The UK's first female – and Scottish – Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy, will appear on the opening day of the Festival and will be joined by a host of literary talent from around the world. From the USA Garrison Keillor will bring the latest instalment of his immensely popular Lake Wobegon series, George Dawes Green will speak about his first novel for 13 years following the extraordinary success of *The Juror* – and he will also present his cult storytelling event, *The Moth*, for the first time in Europe. David Simon and Richard Price, writers of the hit TV series *The Wire*, will be speaking as will Valerie Martin, Nicholson Baker and poet Sharon Olds. Charlotte Square Gardens will also welcome the winner of the first Arabic Booker Prize, Bahaa Taher from Egypt; Ma Jian from China and Zoya Phan from Burma.

Another international element of the programme welcomes a dozen of Sweden's best contemporary authors, including internationally renowned crime writer Henning Mankell. Some well known, some unknown, and some translated and presented in English for the first time will be in unique dialogue with their UK counterparts.

Margaret Atwood will launch her new novel at the Festival, as will Mathias Malzieu from France and Andrey Kurkov from the Ukraine. From closer to home, Charlotte Square Gardens will also showcase brand new work from Richard Dawkins, William Boyd, Michelin-starred chef Tom Kitchin, stage legend Joss Ackland, A L Kennedy, Irvine Welsh, John Burnside, Michael Mansfield and David Peace among others.

Richard Holloway, Chair of the Scottish Arts Council and 2009 Guest Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival, has created and will chair a special series of evening debates in the Spiegeltent, bringing together Festival authors with thinkers and experts from across Edinburgh to

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debate subjects from the economic crisis, childhood, social equality, Islam to the true meaning of happiness.

Holloway said “Scots are an argumentative race, but it is not all contrariness. We have learned during our turbulent history that ideas are dangerous things that need to be tested again and again in debate if they are to enhance rather than enchain the human community. We are proud of the fact that, once again, the EIBF will provide an arena for proposing and challenging ideas on science, religion, politics, and just about anything else that matters to the health of society.”

In this, Scotland’s Year of Homecoming, the Festival welcomes over 200 Scottish authors, and a Celebrating Scotland strand will examine Scottish history, literature, culture, society, and exploration and of course, celebrate our National Bard – Robert Burns. In addition the Festival will explore Scotland’s most exciting creative talent, and introduce some of the finest unpublished fiction and poetry writers from across the creative writing schools of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews, supported by the Scottish Government’s Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund.

Mike Russell, Minister for Culture, said “The line up for this year’s Book Festival is truly impressive with Edinburgh yet again playing host to a plethora of literary talent from home and abroad. In this Year of Homecoming, when we aim to reconnect with millions of people with an affinity to Scotland, I am particularly pleased to see this programme embracing Homecoming by celebrating Scotland’s National Bard and examining our history, culture and society.

“I am delighted today to announce £55,000 Expo funding for the Book Festival’s Scotland’s Writing – an exciting and vibrant project which showcases the best of Scotland’s leading and new writers, and celebrates the Scottish diaspora including the strong literary links between Scotland and Canada. Through a series of high quality events, Scotland’s Writing will celebrate and actively promote Scottish literature and focus new attention on the tremendous wealth and talent of our creative writers.”

Full details of the programme can be found at www.edbookfest.co.uk and ticket sales will open at 8.30am on Monday 22nd June. Tickets may be purchased on-line, over the phone (0845 373 5888) or in person on 22nd June at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, and from Tuesday 23rd June from The Hub on Castlehill.

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EDINBURGH

INTERNATIONAL

BOOK

FESTIVAL

in association with

THE  TIMES

THE SUNDAY TIMES
SCOTLAND

Press Release

15 - 31 August 2009, Charlotte Square Gardens, Edinburgh.

www.edbookfest.co.uk

Tickets for the 2009 Edinburgh International Book Festival will be available from
8.30am on Monday 22 June 2009.

IN PERSON

On **Monday 22nd June** from 8.30am to 6.30pm a specially created Box Office will be situated at the **Edinburgh International Conference Centre** on Morrison Street .

The Box Office will then move to The Hub on the Royal Mile from Tuesday 23 June to Thursday 13 August

and will be open from 10.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Saturday.

When the Festival opens on 15 August, the Box Office will be available in Charlotte Square Gardens daily until 31 August 9.30am to 8.30pm

ON-LINE

Tickets may be booked on-line from 8.30am from Monday 22 June at www.edbookfest.co.uk

BY PHONE

Tickets may be booked over the phone on **0845 373 5888**.

Phone lines are open on Monday 22 June 8.30am to 6.30pm

From Tuesday 23 June to Friday 14 August

lines are open from 10.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Saturday

From Saturday 15 August to Monday 31 August lines are open daily from 9.30am to 8.30pm.

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