

15,16,17 MAY 2015

Press Release

Poets speak up at FLF 2015

Poetry lovers will have a feast at this year's Franschhoek Literary Festival with 15 poetry events – for every possible taste – spread over three days. Far from being the lesser literary cousin of the novel, the form's popularity seems to increase year after year, lending itself, as it does, generously to both quiet reading and reading aloud.

A host of well-known, lesser known, celebrated and award-winning poets will keep their audiences entertained, either at readings or at discussions.

To kick things off, Poetry Programme Director Alexander Matthews will be quizzing Louis Esterhuizen, Kerry Hammerton, Danie Marais and Charl-Pierre Naudé about their new poetry, some of which they will read.

During a late afternoon discussion on Friday, literary agent and poet Isobel Dixon will be discussing with Ingrid Jonker prize-winning poet Karin Schimke, as well as Louis Esterhuizen and Dan Wylie, what poets actually do for a living in *Poets and Their Day Jobs*.

Two poets who also write prose – Finuala Dowling and Bev Rycroft – will discuss how choice of genre affects everything about their work – from the moment of inspiration to the way the audience receives the work.

On Friday night, festival poets will be reading from their work at Essence Restaurant, where the audience can enjoy poetry while they have a drink or dinner.

Saturday's poetry programme spans generations: from Generation Y all the way through to Antjie Krog, the country's poetry matriarch, who will be telling Alexander Matthews about her latest collection, *Synapse*, as well as reading some poems from the collection.

Genna Gardini will be finding out from Jolyn Philips, Kyle Allan and Thabo Jijana, what Generation Y is writing about on Saturday morning in a discussion entitled *Generation Why?*

While the perception is that younger poets prefer the spoken word to the written word, many are still interested in getting published. Linda Kaoma of Badilisha Poetry X-Change, Nick Mulgrew of Prufrock magazine and Colleen Higgs of Modjaji Books will consider how and where poetry is being published in South Africa.

A related discussion entitled, *On Page and On Stage*, takes place late on Saturday afternoon, with Denise Newfield and Adrian 'Diff' van Wyk, among others.

Other events on the poetry programme include well-known poets, including Phillippa Yaa de Villiers, Joan Metelerkamp, Nathan Trantraal, Wendy Woodward and Ian McCullum, discussing and reading the poems of other poets who have influenced them, a discussion on rendering your

15,16,17 MAY 2015

family in poetry, another on how teaching or being taught influences one's poetry, and a discussion entitled *Ecological Urgency*, in which poets will discuss how to convey nature and its crises in poetic form.

‘One of the highlights of the programme is having the accomplished Scottish poet Jackie Kay here for the festival,’ said Matthews. ‘Among the other events she is part of, her poetry fans will be able to hear about her work and key themes during a discussion with Finuala Dowling on Sunday afternoon.’

Franschhoek Literary Festival Director Ann Donald said: ‘Poetry is a genre that is sometimes seen as above the average reader, yet in reality, it seems to be universally loved by old and young, as we’ve seen every year at Franschhoek. Also, poetry is entertaining to audiences, the way that music is. People love to hear poets reading aloud or performing poetry.’

Special focus

One of the major themes of this year's poetry programme is the importance of learning poetry by heart, linked to the the international Poetry for Life initiative which has been introduced to South African schools this year. Alexander Matthews, the editor of *Aerodrome* magazine, will be discussing this topic on Friday morning in a talk themed *Reading to Remember*. He and four panelists will explore why learning poetry by heart at school is important.

This discussion will be followed immediately by the Poetry for Life competition finals in the Church Hall, hosted by multiple award-winning poet Finuala Dowling, and judged by UK poet Jackie Kay, radio host John Maytham, Morag Styles (previously a professor of children's poetry at the University of Cambridge), Afrikaaps poet Nathan Trantraal, and Poetry for Life coordinator, Celia van Druten.

For the full programme, please visit www.flf.co.za. Tickets can be bought at www.webtickets.co.za.