

Shevchenko Foundation presents

The 4th Biennial Kobzar Literary Award 2012 Ceremony and Dinner

Thursday, March 1, 2012

Palais Royale: 1601 Lakeshore Boulevard West, Toronto, Ontario M6K 3C1
Cocktails: 6:30 pm; Dinner: 7:30 pm; Dress: Cocktail; Tickets: \$250/person

Jurors

Denise Chong

Denise Chong is best known for her award-winning *The Concubine's Children*, one of the first non-fiction narratives of a Chinese family in Canada, and a Globe and Mail bestseller for 93 weeks. Her second book, *The Girl in the Picture*, about a girl who survived a napalm attack in the Vietnam War, was ground breaking in its portrayal of life in war-torn Vietnam. Both books were finalists for the Governor-General's award for literary non-fiction. Denise's most recent book, *Egg on Mao* spans 20th century China, pivoting on a bus mechanic's defiant act in defacing Mao's iconic portrait during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests. Additionally, Denise Chong's work has been important to the study of Canada as reflected in a speech that she delivered entitled "Being Canadian" which has been widely anthologized in books such as *Who Speaks for Canada: Words that Shape a Country* by D. Morton and M. Weinfeld (1998), and *Great Canadian Speeches* by D. Gruending (2004). Denise holds three honorary doctorates from York University, Bishop's University, and the University of Northern British Columbia.

Randall Maggs

Born in Vancouver, Randall Maggs has lived for the last 34 years on the west coast of Newfoundland where he taught Literature at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College. He is the author of two collections of poetry, *Timely Departures* (Breakwater 1994) and *Night Work: The Sawchuk Poems* (Brick 2004), and co-editor of two anthologies pairing the poetry of Ireland with that of Canada and Newfoundland & Labrador. His work in Ireland won a Coracle Fellowship from Memorial University. He is also artistic director of Newfoundland's March Hare Festival of Words and Music and sits on the board of the Province's Arts Council. The *Sawchuk Poems* was launched at the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto, at the Canadian Embassy in Dublin and in Winnipeg in conjunction with Oseredok and Winnipeg's Ukrainian community. The book won the 2008 Winterset Award, the 2009 E.J. Pratt Poetry Award and the 2010 Kobzar Literary Award. It was also listed as a Globe and Mail 100 top book of 2008.

Nino Ricci

Nino Ricci's novels have been published to critical acclaim around the world. They include the *Lives of the Saints* Trilogy, adapted as a miniseries starring Kris Kristofferson and Sophia Loren, and *Testament*, a fictional reimagining of the life of Jesus. His most recent novel is *The Origin of Species*, which earned him the Canadian Authors Association Fiction Award as well as his second Governor General's Award for Fiction. He is also the author of *Pierre Elliott Trudeau*, a biography that forms part of Penguin's *Extraordinary Canadians* series. Ricci has taught workshops and held writing positions at institutions across Canada and the U.S., including York University, the University of Windsor, John Carroll University, Bridgewater College, and Colorado College. He has served on the faculty of The Humber School for Writers since 1992. He is also a past president of Canadian PEN, the writers' human rights organization. In 2006 Ricci was the winner of the Alistair MacLeod Award for Literary Achievement, and in 2010 of York University's Pinnacle Achievement Award. He was recently appointed to the Order of Canada.

M G Vassanji

M G Vassanji is the author of six novels, two collections of short stories, a travel memoir about India, and a biography of Mordecai Richler. His work has appeared in various countries and several languages. He is winner of the Giller Prize (1994, 2003) for best novel in Canada; the Governor General's Prize (2009) for best work of nonfiction; the Harbourfront Festival Prize; the Commonwealth First Book Prize (Africa, 1990); and the Bressani Prize. *The Assassin's Song* was also shortlisted for India's Crossword Prize. He is a member of the Order of Canada.

M G Vassanji was born in Kenya and raised in Tanzania. Before coming to Canada in 1978, he attended MIT and the University of Pennsylvania, where he specialized in theoretical nuclear physics. From 1978-1980 he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Atomic Energy of Canada, and from 1980 to 1989 he was a research associate at the University of Toronto. During this period he developed a keen interest in medieval Indian literature and history, co-founded and edited a literary magazine (*The Toronto South Asian Review*, later renamed *The Toronto Review of Contemporary Writing Abroad*), and began writing stories and a novel. In 1989, the publication of his first novel, *The Gunny Sack*, ended his active career in nuclear physics.

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