Wiwa, Walsh, Rushdie and Flannery to Speak at Shaw Festival this Fall

Media Release #20


Inspired by the brilliance, bravery, humanity and humour of Bernard Shaw, the Shaw Festival is a crucible of progressive and provocative ideas which illuminate our understanding of today’s world. Relevant and engaging theatre on the festival’s three stages is enhanced each season with a robust education program. Similarly, these four prominent and passionate speakers use historical contexts to help explain dilemmas that we deal with today.

On announcing the lecture series, Shaw Festival Executive Director Colleen Blake said: “We have long wanted to have a dynamic lecture series that will illustrate how the ideas of Bernard Shaw still resonate in discussions about the critical issues of today’s world. We are delighted that, thanks to the Government of Ontario, we will be able to launch the series this season.”

Ken Wiwa

September 16, 2007

“If this is your land, where are your stories: land rights and the struggle for a new map of Africa”

Using the struggle of the Ogoni people of Nigeria to retain land rights and identity in the face of international business interests, Ken Wiwa Jr. explores economically viable and ethical strategies for growth in developing nations. Wiwa’s experience as the son of one of Africa’s best-loved authors - executed for his resistance to multinational business interests in Nigeria - has spurred him to continue his father’s work. Schooled in the art of public debate as an activist during the international campaign to save his father, Ken has spoken on behalf of his Ogoni people across the world. As a journalist, Ken appears regularly in the world’s major news media. He now lives and works in Nigeria where he served as an aide to former President Obasanjo and has recently been re-appointed as an aide to the new President, Umaru Yar'Adua.

Mary Walsh

September 30, 2007

Mary Walsh survived a troubled childhood and years of battling personal demons to ultimately emerge as one of Canada’s most celebrated comedians. Her credits include extensive work in theatre as an actor, director and playwright, most notably with the famed Newfoundland troupe CODCO, as well as in film and television. She is perhaps best known as the creator of CBC Television’s satirical current events show This Hour Has 22 Minutes. Her latest venture is the unconventional literary talk show Mary Walsh: Open Book on CBC TV.
Sir Salman Rushdie  October 7, 2007
"Public Events, Private Lives: A Writer’s View of Contemporary Politics"
Sir Salman Rushdie is one of the most successful, controversial and celebrated authors of our time. He is the author of such international bestsellers as Midnight’s Children and The Satanic Verses. The latter was deemed sacrilegious by Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini, who issued a fatwa against Rushdie in 1989. While under constant threat of death, Rushdie went on to produce some of his most compelling work. Without doubt, Rushdie is one of today’s most witty and provocative public intellectuals.

Tim Flannery  October 21, 2007
Tim Flannery is on a mission. He believes that human activity is drastically altering the earth’s climate, and that before too long these changes will have a devastating effect on life on this planet. He wants to mobilize the social and political will to address this problem before it’s too late. His book The Weather Makers: How Man Is Changing the Climate and What It Means for Life on Earth debuted on the New York Times bestseller list and tells the story of climate change over millions of years to help us understand the predicament we face today.

Each lecture will be held at 11 am in the Festival Theatre. Tickets are $20 each or $65 for the series. Ticket buyers for the lecture series will also receive a 25% discount on tickets purchased for same-day Shaw Festival matinee productions in the Festival Theatre. Tickets are available online at www.shawfest.com or by calling the Shaw Festival Box Office at 1-800-511-7429 or 905-468-2172.

The 2007 season is proudly presented by HSBC Bank Canada/HSBC Bank USA, N.A.

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For more information, or to download images from our image bank to accompany this release, members of the media may contact:

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