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**BOSTON BOOK FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES KEYNOTE SPEAKER FOR 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL  
EVENT  
OCT. 15, 2011**

(BOSTON) Organizers of the Boston Book Festival announced today that the keynote speaker for this year's event will be celebrated novelist and poet Michael Ondaatje. The third annual festival will take place on Saturday, Oct. 15, 2011, in various locations around Copley Square.

Ondaatje's artistry and aesthetic have influenced an entire generation of writers and readers. Although he is best known as a novelist, Ondaatje's work also encompasses memoir, poetry, and film, and reveals a passion for defying conventional form. In his transcendent novel *The English Patient*—made into the Academy Award-winning film—he explores the stories of people history fails to reveal, intersecting four diverse lives at the end of World War II. Born in Sri Lanka, the former Ceylon, of Indian/Dutch ancestry, he went to school in England, and then moved to Canada. He is now a Canadian citizen. From the memoir of his childhood, *Running in the Family*, to his Governor-General's Award-winning book of poetry, *There's a Trick With a Knife I'm Learning To Do*, to *The English Patient*, Ondaatje casts a spell over his readers. And having won the British Commonwealth's highest honor—the Booker Prize—he has taken his rightful place as a contemporary literary treasure. He is the author of four collections of poetry, and his works of fiction include *Anil's Ghost*, *In the Skin of a Lion*, *Coming Through Slaughter*, and *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*. In 2000, Michael Ondaatje was awarded the Kiriya Pacific Rim Book Prize, the Prix Medicis, the Governor General's Award, and the Giller Prize for *Anil's Ghost*. Ondaatje's most recent nonfiction work is *The Conversations: Walter Murch & the Art of Editing Film*. His novel *Divisadero* (2007) won Canada's Governor-General Award. In February 2011 his stage adaptation of *Divisadero* was performed in Toronto. His forthcoming novel, *The Cat's Table*, will be published in Fall 2011.

According to Executive Director Deborah Z Porter, "The Boston Book Festival is honored to be one of Michael Ondaatje's first public forums in the U.S. where he will discuss his forthcoming and much anticipated novel, *The Cat's Table*. It should be an extraordinary event."

Previously announced authors appearing at the Boston Book Festival this year include **Jennifer Egan**, author of *A Visit From the Goon Squad*, and winner of the 2011 Pulitzer Prize, and the 2011 National Book Critics Circle Award, for Fiction; **Siddhartha Mukherjee**, author of *The Emperor of all Maladies: A Biography of Cancer*, winner of the 2011 Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction; **Sarah Bakewell**, author of *How to Live: Or, a Life of Montaigne in One Question and Twenty Attempts at an Answer*, winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Biography; **Isabel Wilkerson**, author of *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*, winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for General Nonfiction. The complete line-up, which will include over 100 authors, scholars and presenters, will be announced over the summer. The featured authors will represent a wide array of programming, and include award winners, best-selling authors, renowned scholars, children's writers, and writers of fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

In just two years, the Boston Book Festival has become one of the most anticipated events in the cultural life of the City. Boston Book Festival organizers estimate that about 25,000 people took part in indoor and outdoor 2010 festival activities through the 12-hour day. More than 130 authors and scholars participated in forty presentations, panels and participatory sessions in various Back Bay venues. The Festival takes advantage of the great architectural treasures in Copley Square, utilizing such venues as Trinity Church, Old South Church and the Boston Public Library, among others. A street fair in the square features exhibitors and live music throughout the day. All daytime events are FREE and open to the public.

In 2010, the Boston Book Festival initiated the One City One Story program, which saw the distribution of 30,000 copies of a Tom Perrotta short story throughout the Boston area, and culminated in a town hall meeting with the author and more than 200 readers eager to discuss the story. Boston Book Festival organizers will continue this well-received and innovative program, and will announce this year's story in the coming weeks.

The Boston Book Festival is produced by the non-profit organization of the same name, and is made possible with the generous support of sponsors and individual donors. For more information about the Boston Book Festival, visit [www.bostonbookfest.org](http://www.bostonbookfest.org).

Boston Book Festival Partners include Mayor Thomas M. Menino; The Mayor's Office of Arts, Tourism and Special Events; The City of Boston Parks and Recreation Department; ReadBoston; Boston Public Library; the Boston Athenæum; PEN New England; Grub Street; Trinity Church; Old South Church; Boston Children's Museum; Cambridge Public Library, New Center for Arts and Culture; 826 Boston; Brattle Theatre, Berklee College of Music; Emerson College; Harvard Book Store; Brookline Booksmith, Porter Square Books; Independent Film Festival Boston and Newtonville Books.

**Boston Book Festival Board of Directors:** President Deborah Z. Porter; Treasurer Steve Oristaglio; Secretary Susana B. Lopez; Hannah Gilligan Com Moss, Paul La Camera, Callie Crossley, Robert Duboff, Rona Kiley, Glenda Manzi, Jeff Mayersohn, John Taylor "Ike" Williams. **Honorary Advisory Board:** Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Ann Gund, Steve Grossman, Arthur Golden, Phil Balboni, Amy Ryan, Diane Patrick, Tom Perrotta, Lou Casagrande.

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