

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Top Irish writers lined up for summer school

A host of well-known Irish authors are lined up for the 16th Irish Writers Summer School, to be held at London Metropolitan University next week.

Writers at this year's event include author and journalist Mary Kenny and award-winning writer Maurice Leitch.

The summer school gives students the opportunity to read and learn about a broad spectrum of Irish writing and gain valuable insights into the different approaches such writing involves.

Each week a set text is discussed in class on Tuesday evening and the following Thursday, the author reads and/or speaks about it to students.

Each writer talks about their family background and discusses their motivations and experience of emigration to and/or life in London in the context of their work.

This year, Mary Kenny will talk about her recent play *Allegiance*, which dramatises the relationship between Michael Collins and Winston Churchill. Maurice Leitch will discuss his latest novel *Tell Me About It*, set amongst London's Irish community.

Other guest writers include Booker long-listed author Gerard Donovan, Irish Post journalist Joe Horgan and bookseller Tony Whelan.

-Ends-

Notes to editors:

16th Irish Writers in London Summer School

9 June - 15 July 2011

Times: 6.00 - 8.30pm (refreshments provided)

Tuesdays and Thursdays with the opening night on Thursday 9 June and an additional class on Friday 15 July

Fees: £125 (concessions £95)

Enrol at: <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research-units/iset/courses/irish-writers-in-london-summer-school-2011.cfm>

No prior qualifications are required to attend

Author biographies:

Mary Kenny has been a journalist for over four decades, working in London and Dublin. She has contributed to more than 25 newspapers and journals, including the Daily Mail, Guardian, Times, Catholic Herald, Irish Times, and Times Literary Supplement. She has a special interest in the relationship between England and Ireland which she explored in a biography of 'Lord Haw-Haw' and in her book, Crown and Shamrock: Love and Hate between Ireland and the British Monarchy.

Maurice Leitch has been publishing novels and other works for over 50 years. Rated by Robert McLiam Wilson, as 'perhaps the finest Irish novelist of his generation' he was awarded the Guardian Fiction Prize in 1969 for Liberty Lad and won the Whitbread Prize in 1981 for his novel Silver's City. He moved to London from his native County Antrim to work as a BBC radio producer and became editor of A Book at Bedtime on Radio Four until leaving in 1989 to write full-time. He was awarded an MBE for services to literature in 1999.

Gerard Donovan is the author of the novels Schopenhauer's Telescope, which won the 2004 Kerry Group Irish Fiction Award and was long-listed for the 2003 Booker Prize, Doctor Salt and, most recently, Julius Winsome, described in the Irish Times as 'a timeless fable of loss, isolation and violence.' Born in Ireland, he currently lives in the south-west of England and will be discussing his acclaimed book of short stories Country of the Grand.

Joe Horgan was born in Birmingham to Irish parents. He was shortlisted for the Hennessy Prize in 2003 and won the Patrick Kavanagh Award for poetry in 2004. He currently writes a weekly column for the Irish Post and reviews for Books Ireland. His work has also appeared on RTE radio and television. His first collection, Slipping Letters Beneath the Sea, was published by Doghouse in 2008. In 2010 Horgan published a new collection with Collins Press, A Song at Your Backdoor, and was anthologised in Landing Places: Immigrant Poets in Ireland (Dedalus).

Tony Whelan was born near the Mountains of Mourne in 1928 and studied at Queens University Belfast before moving to England in 1952. He worked as a teacher and later in publishing and public relations and became a close friend of John McGahern. Since retiring, he has developed a specialism in selling second-hand and antiquarian Irish books. He will be discussing his memoir, The Last Chapter, which has been described as, 'a crystal clear window onto his life's experiences' and 'an intriguing portrait of the literary worlds of Ireland and England in the twentieth century.'

For more information:

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