



Embargoed until Wednesday 29th May 2019 at 9.30pm

Kerry Group Irish Novel of the Year Announced as Listowel Writers' Week 49th festival commences

Listowel Writers' Week officially and literally threw wide open the doors of The Listowel Arms Hotel to begin its 49th Festival on the evening of Wednesday the 29th May 2019.

A veritable cornucopia of Irish and international poets, playwrights, novelists, short story writers, artists, illustrators and musicians descended onto the heritage town of lovely Listowel Wednesday evening for the 49th Opening and Awards Ceremony of Listowel Writers' Week 2019.

Leading Irish author Joseph O'Connor spoke eloquently as he officially opened the Festival. During this very well attended event, the audience were entertained by internationally acclaimed accordion player Liam O'Connor and award-winning Limerick lady and songwriter Emma Langford. Brian Kirk, who was the winner of the Listowel Writers' Week Irish Poem of the Year 2019 at the An Post Irish Book Awards, movingly read his winning poem 'Birthday'.

Listowel Writers' Week Chairperson, Catherine Moylan, enthusiastically welcomed attendees and guests alike to the Festival, "I invite you to escape, imagine, listen and interact with the world's finest writers, poets and playwrights who are with us this weekend." Catherine acknowledged and thanked her team of "committed, friendly and willing workers without whose efforts, the Festival would simply not enjoy the popularity and success that make it so unique."

The John B. Keane Lifetime Achievement Award, in association with Mercier Press, was presented to Listowel native Danny Hannon founder of the award winning Lartigue Theatre Company in Listowel. The annual award was presented to this very popular local gentleman in recognition of his outstanding contribution and commitment to theatre, new writing for theatre and for consistently fostering local talent down through the years.

The biggest applause of the night was kept for the announcement of the **Kerry Group Irish Novel of the Year Award** 2019 whereupon Irish novelist David Park with his novel '*Travelling in a Strange Land*', was presented by Frank Hayes of Kerry Group, with the €15,000 prize.

Frank Hayes, representing sponsor Kerry Group commented: "*As the 'Kerry Group Irish Novel of the Year Award' nears its 25th year, it continues to be a much sought after accolade in the Irish literary calendar and brings global prestige to the literature of Ireland. This year's shortlist includes five wonderful novels that sit comfortably alongside the previous winners of this prestigious prize. Congratulations to each of the shortlisted authors and most especially to our Kerry Group Irish Novel of the Year winner, David Park, for his illuminating work Travelling in a Strange Land.*"

Frank also thanked this year's adjudicators Carol Drinkwater and Ian McGuire for their hard work and dedication to the adjudication of more than fifty Irish novels submitted for this prestigious prize.

The Pigott Poetry Prize was awarded to Ailbhe Darcy who won €10,000 for her anthology 'Insistence'. This prize is for a published collection of poetry by an Irish poet and is generously sponsored each year by Mark Pigott, KBE, Chairman and Chief Executive of PACCAR Inc. Mark's family originated from Listowel and emigrated to the United States in the late 1890s.

The Festival continues until Sunday 2nd June and will feature a host of international and national writers and guests for five days of books, banter and bestsellers in the award -winning heritage town of Listowel!

Featured guests include Colm Tóibín, Steph Booth, Deryn Rees Jones, Alexandra Pringle, Joseph O'Connor, Elizabeth Day, Marianne Power, Emma Dabiri, Niall Breslin, Colm O'Regan, John Boyne, Stuart Barnes and Douglas Kennedy to name but a few from the amazing programme line-up for 2019.

The National Children's Festival which runs concurrently programmes a wide variety of literary based events and over four days will feature Philip Ardagh, Róisín Meaney, Niall Breslin, Shane Hegarty, Chris Judge, Sheena Dempsey and Dave Rudden and a host of family themed events, many of which serve to acknowledge the 80th anniversary of the screening of 'The Wizard of Oz'.

So ... polish up your ruby slippers and follow the Yellow Brick Road to Listowel where we can guarantee something magical for everybody this Bank Holiday weekend in The Kingdom of Words!

To see all that is on offer and getting booking, visit writersweek.ie

ENDS//

For more information:
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NOTE TO EDITOR:

Photographs syndicated directly to the Picture Desk from Domnick Walsh Photography
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Full List of ALL Award Winners 2019

Kerry Group Irish Novel of the Year Award Winner

David Park Travelling in a Strange Land

Shortlisted

Emer Martin
John Boyne
Sally Rooney
Jess Kidd

The Cruelty Men
Ladder to the Sky
Normal People
The Hoarder

Pigott Poetry Prize Winner

Ailbhe Darcy

Insistence

Shortlisted

Leanne O'Sullivan
Martina Evans
Men

A Quarter of an Hour
Now we can Talk Openly about

Bryan MacMahon Short Story Award Winner

Sarah Harte

Submerged

Shortlisted

Leo Cullen
Richard Cahill
Eoghan Egan
Reason...

Red Ford Cortina
The Last Time
Everything happens for a

Martin Malone

(and other lies)
By the River

Duais Foras na Gaeilge Winner

Áine Ni Ghlinn

Ni Mé

Shortlisted

Micheál O Siochrú
Máire Ní Bhriain
Marcus MacConghail
Micheál O Ruairc
Micheál O Ruairc

Faghairt
Aill
Oilithreacht
Gadaí na Geanmnaíochta
Faoileán Cathrach

**Eamon Keane Full-length Play Award
Winner**

Michael Hilliard Mulcahy

A Brittle Sanctuary

Shortlisted

Neil Flynn
Robert Higgins
Gillian Grattan
Darren Donohue
Fergal O'Byrne

Moonflower
Low are the Punches
Mr. Sun
Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks
Trust No-One

**Single Poem Award
Winner**

Laurence O'Dwyer

Si Phan Don

Shortlisted

Sighle Meehan
John W. Sexton
Cliona O'Connell
Catherine Hughes

Her Dallawalla Jar
The Stars in the Buttons
The Air Museum
Drawing a Line

**Poetry Collection
Winner**

Siobhan Ní Dhomhnaill

Ait Agus Iontach Bheith Beo

Shortlisted

Sophie O'Sullivan
Paul McMahon
Fiona Smith
A.M. Cousins
Majella Kelly

The Beautiful Struggle
The Yellow Bell
Travellers of the North
Forenoon
Last Man on Omev

**Writers' Week Originals Humorous Essay
Winner**

Kevin Foley

The Siege of Venice

Shortlisted
Patrick Hull
Rachel Pinckheard

Hull
First Impressions

**Irish Post Short Story Award
Winner**

Gavin O'Toole

With Those Eyes

**Nilsson Local Heritage Writing Award
Winner**

Arnold Horner

Mapping Laois

Shortlisted

Christopher Power

The Last Dalcassian Bard

**Kerry Co Council Creative Writing 9 & Under
Winner**

Ellie May Walsh

My Cousin Dan

Second

Chloe Baily

Breaking News

Third

Leah Quane

Daisy's Diaries

**Kerry Co Council Creative Writing 12 & Under
Winner**

Charlotte Williams

Love, Lizzie

Second

Clara Ní Nuanain

Whispers in the Woods

Third

Darrell O'Connor

Mothman

**Kerry Co Council Creative Writing 15 & Under
Winner**

Claire Dineen

The Wordsmith

Second

Aoibhe Horan

Adrift

Third

Chantelle Broderick

Money Matters

**Kerry Co Council Creative Writing 18 & Under
Winner**

Amy Cahill Hands

Second

Sarah O'Neill The Woods

Third

Emma Harris Burn

**Creative Writing for Special Educational Needs 18 & Under
Winner**

Rachel O'Connor Being Different...

Second

William O'Connor As I look into the Abyss

Third

Fabiano De Silva Sonnet

**Creative Writing for Adults with Special Needs
Winner**

Sean Patrick Foley My Grandmother's Funeral

Second

Paula Noctor My Mam

Third

Brendan O'Sullivan A Beautiful Poem for a true
Friend

**Con Houlihan Young Journalist Award
Winner**

Cormac Thompson Tadhg Flynn A Master of His
Craft