



Photo of Salman Rushdie © Rachel Eliza Griffiths

“Free speech is the whole thing, the whole ball game. Free speech is life itself.”
- Salman Rushdie

The Freedom to Write and to Read: Standing with Salman Rushdie

**A special event presented by PEN Canada, Penguin Random House Canada,
Toronto International Festival of Authors and Writers’ Trust of Canada**

TORONTO, September 8, 2022 -- Today **PEN Canada, Penguin Random House Canada, Toronto International Festival of Authors (TIFA) and Writers’ Trust of Canada** announced a special event, *The Freedom to Write and to Read: Standing with Salman Rushdie*, featuring a remarkable lineup of distinguished writers, to take place during TIFA at Harbourfront Centre on **September 27, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.**

On August 12, 2022, Rushdie was stabbed multiple times at the Chautauqua Institution in western New York, a horrific attack viewed worldwide as an assault on free expression and free speech itself. This special event at TIFA is a show of solidarity with Rushdie, to celebrate his remarkable literary achievements and courage, and to highlight the fundamental importance of freedom of expression for a just and open society.

The event will be hosted by CBC *The Current*'s **Matt Galloway**, and feature **Margaret Atwood, The Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson, John Irving, Ian McEwan, Deepa Mehta, Rohinton Mistry, John Ralston Saul** and **Shyam Selvadurai** reading personally selected passages from Rushdie's work.

Free event registration is now open at festivalofauthors.ca. The event will also be featured in an upcoming special national broadcast on CBC's *The Current*.

“At a moment of rising intolerance, this brutal attack reminds us of the fragility of freedom of expression and the moral obligation to defend it, today, tomorrow, and every day,” said **Grace Westcott, President, PEN Canada**.

Penguin Random House Canada CEO, Kristin Cochrane said: “We are proud to stand with Salman, alongside our incredible partners and these renowned writers, to honour and uphold our commitment to free expression. Louise Dennys, executive publisher, has worked tirelessly over the decades with Salman —as his friend, editor and publisher—to ensure our fierce and ongoing commitment to a freer, protected, and more democratic society. This event honours and furthers this work we do together and supports Salman’s vision, one that champions respect, understanding, and recognizes the importance of storytelling that inspires and challenges us, and ultimately enlarges our world.”

“In 1988, the Toronto International Festival of Authors proudly hosted Salman Rushdie to discuss his new novel, *The Satanic Verses*,” shared **Roland Gulliver, Director, TIFA**. “In 2022, the role of literary festivals remains the same: celebrations where stories from all perspectives are shared safely with openness and respect. Protecting book events as safe places for all kinds of discussion is integral to the very spirit of their celebration.”

Sir Salman Rushdie’s internationally acclaimed books have been translated into over 40 languages. He is the author of 14 award-winning novels, including *Midnight’s Children* (for which he won the Booker Prize and the Best of the Booker), *Shame*, *The Satanic Verses*, *The Moor’s Last Sigh* and *Quichotte*, all of which have been shortlisted for the Booker Prize; a collection of stories, *East, West*; a memoir, *Joseph Anton*; a work of reportage; and three collections of essays, most recently *Languages of Truth*. His many awards include the Whitbread Prize for Best Novel, which he won twice; the PEN/Allen Foundation Literary Service Award; the National Arts Award; the French Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger; the European Union’s Aristeion Prize for Literature; the Budapest Grand Prize for Literature; and the Italian Premio Grinzane Cavour. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and he is a Distinguished Writer in Residence at New York University. He is a former president of PEN America. His new novel, *Victory City*, will be published in February 2023.

About PEN Canada

PEN Canada is a nonpartisan organization of writers, and readers, that works with others to defend freedom of expression as a basic human right, at home and abroad. PEN Canada celebrates literature, fights censorship, defends freedom of expression and helps exiled writers to make new lives in Canada. Visit PenCanada.ca for more information.

About Penguin Random House Canada

Penguin Random House Canada aims to nourish a universal passion for reading by connecting authors and their writing with readers everywhere. The company publishes over 800 books in various formats each year in the North American market across nineteen distinct imprints and distributes another 10,000 titles in Canada on behalf of Penguin Random House publishers in the U.S. and the U.K., and many clients. It has also developed its own internationally recognized Toronto-based audiobook program, and runs an in-house recording studio. Visit penguinrandomhouse.ca for more information or follow @PenguinRandomCA.

About Toronto International Festival of Authors

The Toronto International Festival of Authors (TIFA) inspires, empowers and connects through the art of stories, offering booklovers a breadth of bold, ambitious and accessible literary experiences. As Canada’s largest literary festival, the charitable organization provides engaging opportunities to meet, hear and learn from the world’s best contemporary writers and thinkers, and to celebrate the power of stories. Since 1974, TIFA has presented thousands of authors, including 22 Nobel Laureates, who represent diverse perspectives and a range of literary

genres for all ages. TIFA's creative programmes continue to adapt to changing times, capturing the most innovative and enlightening forms of storytelling, on stage and online. Alongside the flagship Festival, TIFA delivers a year-round programme of events and activities that reflect Toronto to its residents, its literature to the nation, and its creative ambition to the world. TIFA celebrates the 43rd edition of the Festival on its new dates, September 22 – October 2, 2022. Visit festivalofauthors.ca for more information.

About Writers' Trust of Canada

The Writers' Trust of Canada is a charitable organization that seeks to advance, nurture, and celebrate Canadian writers and writing through national literary awards and a portfolio of programs that includes a fellowship, financial grants, and a writers' retreat. Writers' Trust programming is designed to champion excellence in Canadian writing, to improve the status of writers, and to create connections between writers and readers. Canada's writers receive more financial support from the Writers' Trust than from any other non-governmental organization or foundation in the country. Additional information is available at writerstrust.com.

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Touchwood PR

Publicist Katie Saunoris
katiesaunoris@gmail.com

Toronto International Festival of Authors

Amy Dennis
media@festivalofauthors.ca

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