



## Writers Fest wraps up with record attendance again

**(October 29, 2015 – Vancouver)** The Vancouver Writers Fest wrapped up Sunday after attracting more than 17,000 attendees to the six-day event, breaking all previous ticket sales. With a record-setting 90 events featuring 110 authors from around the world, the Writers Fest solidified its standing as one of the major autumn highlights in Vancouver, and the premier literary festival in Canada.

This year's Festival showcased the Man Booker Prize winner **Marlon James's** only Canadian appearance, as well as appearances by finalists for the IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, the Governor General's literary awards and the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize. In a special event the Writers Fest presented all five finalists for this year's Giller Prize.

The Festival also featured events focusing on freedom of expression and the price that writers, such as jailed Saudi blogger **Raif Badawi**, pay for making their thoughts and opinions public, a right we often take for granted in Canada. "We took risks this year with the program," says Hal Wake, Artistic Director of the Festival. "We know from 28 years of mounting this Festival that our audiences are thoughtful, engaged, and eager to participate in discussions that matter." Appearing alongside Badawi's wife, Ensaf Haidar, to whom Canada has given asylum, was award-winning author and journalist **Mohammed Fahmy**, recently released from an Egyptian jail where he had been imprisoned on terrorism-related charges.

Events ranged from a musical cabaret to spoken word performances to thoughtful discussions to side-splitting readings over tea and scones. More than 105 school groups also attended the Festival from the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast, taking in events for all ages from kindergarten to Grade 12, and in French as well as English.

More than 350 volunteers assisted in running this Festival, with almost 80 per cent of those returning to the Festival as volunteers from previous years.

Following the Festival, hugely popular author **John Irving** will star in a special event. *An Evening with John Irving* takes place Tuesday, Dec. 1, at 7:30 pm at The Vancouver

Playhouse and tickets are on sale now through [vancouveritix.com](http://vancouveritix.com). The Festival is also looking forward to hosting **David Sedaris** on May 8, 2016, at the Vogue Theatre.

For further information, contact:  
Judith Walker, Media Relations Manager  
Vancouver Writers Fest  
604.921.4029  
[media@writersfest.bc.ca](mailto:media@writersfest.bc.ca)