

Press Note:

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2016 – Day 2

Event: ‘Poetry Cafe’

A special session dedicated to the love of poetry of the city

Kolkata, 15th January, 2016: In what was a literary innovation, Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2016 brought to the literature loving audience of Kolkata - ‘Poetry Café’ hosted at Goethe Institut /Max Muller Bhavan. The Café’ featured remarkable, exclusive and unconventional rendition of the art called poetry and attracted not only poets but the poetry enthusiasts of Kolkata.

The session commenced with introduction of the concept of ‘Poetry Café’ by Goethe Institut /Max Muller Bhavan and Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival, followed by the **Tribute to Shankho Ghosh**, with **Kalyan Ray** and **Srijato** talking about the translation project of Ghosh’s poems in English, German and Spanish.

In the evening the atmosphere became vibrant with a ‘Medley’ of poetry readings and discussions by eminent poets **Anjum Hasan, Kazim Ali, Avik Chanda, Bashabi Fraser** and **Bina Sarkar Elias**. It was soon followed by **Poetry Paradigm** and **Pop-Up poets** who read their works in an intimate atmosphere.

About Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) 2016

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) is Kolkata’s pioneering literary festival. Instituted in 2010 by the Apeejay Surrendra Group and its heritage Oxford Bookstore on Park Street, AKLF grew out of the bookstore’s year round involvement with books, writers & publishers. In the seven years since Kolkata saw her first literary festival in AKLF, literary festivals have mushroomed across the country, but AKLF stands apart with its unique identity as the only one with a nearly 100 year old bookstore as its nucleus. AKLF offers an atmosphere of warm, welcoming intimacy, favours depth over size, and includes a variety of subjects, from history to the environment. AKLF also celebrates Kolkata’s magnificent public monuments and heritage sites as settings for Festival events, and eminent literati and cultural stalwarts from across India and overseas join the festival scheduled every year in the second week of January. In 2016 AKLF celebrates diverse themes encompassing books, theatre, the arts and cinema. AKLF’s focus is on younger writers, newer voices and fresh audiences in its ongoing attempt to build an audience for books and reading. The 7th edition of AKLF is poised to scale new heights, with an outstanding and meticulously curated programme, bringing the world and the nation to Kolkata. Continuing to celebrate the city’s magnificent public monuments and heritage sites the festival rediscovers the quaint and hidden charms of the city through heritage walks. AKLF highlights several unique concepts with a fresh approach that reflects current concerns such as diversity, gender equality, continuities across borders and youth engagements, which are also broad themes running through the festival. AKLF signature heritage sites include Nandan, Town Hall steps, The Indian Museum, Presidency University, Tollygunge Club and Victoria Memorial. AKLF 2016 has participation from

Australia, Israel, Scotland, Italy, Nigeria, Portugal as well as England, France, Germany, Pakistan, Bhutan and others. Some of the prominent personalities who will be part of the literary extravaganza are Ben Okri, Meera Syal, Christine Manfield, Ashis Nandy, Vir Sanghvi, Bharathi S Pradhan, Shatrughan Sinha, Shobhaa De and more. The four day long, multi-faceted event has several stimulating components designed to give visitors and the audience an enriching experience, with a great blend of literature, culture, art and heritage. And all of this is absolutely free for Kolkata and her culture-loving audience.

Notes to Editors

Kalyan Ray, grew up in Calcutta and was educated in India and the US, and has taught in Greece, Ecuador, Jamaica and the Philippines where he was a Visiting Professor of Comparative Theology. His poems and translations have appeared at the US and India; some have been anthologized. He has published several books of translations of contemporary Indian poetry into English, including *City of Memories*, which has a Preface by Allen Ginsberg, and *Emperor Babur's Prayers and Other Poems* by Sankha Ghosh. He is the author of the novel *Eastwords* (was adopted by several universities and colleges in Asia and the US as a text in courses on Post-Colonial literature) and his most recent work, *No Country*, is based on his own experiences. He is currently completing his third novel *A Rain of Stones*. He lives now in India.

Anjum Hasan, is an Indian poet and novelist. *Street on the Hill* (Sahitya Akademi, 2006) was her debut collection of poems. Her debut novel *Lunatic in my Head* (Zubaan-Penguin, 2007) was shortlisted for the Crossword Book Award 2007. Her second novel *Neti, Neti* was longlisted for the Man Asian Literary Prize and DSC Prize for South Asian Literature, and shortlisted for The Hindu Literary Prize. Her new novel *The Cosmopolitans*, which explores the angst of the new urban Indian, has received critical praise.

Kazim Ali, poet, editor, and prose writer was born in the United Kingdom. He received a BA and MA from the University of Albany-SUNY, and an MFA from New York University. In 2003 Ali co-founded Nightboat Books and served as the press's publisher until 2007. He has received an Individual Excellence Award from the Ohio Arts Council, and his poetry has been featured in *Best American Poetry*. Ali has been a regular columnist for the *American Poetry Review* and a contributing editor for the Association of Writers and Writing Programs' *Writer's Chronicle*. He is a former member of the Cocoon Theatre Modern Dance Company. Ali's poetry collections include *The Far Mosque* (2005), which won Alice James Books' New England/New York Award, *The Fortieth Day* (2008), and *Sky Ward* (2013). His prose includes *The Disappearance of Seth* (2009), *Bright Felon: Autobiography and Cities* (2009), and the forthcoming *Resident Alien: On Border-crossing and the Undocumented Divine*. He is also the author of the novel *Quinn's Passage* (2005), which was named one of the Best Books of 2005 by *Chronogram* magazine. Ali has taught at Oberlin College and the low-residency Stonecoast MFA program at the University of Southern Maine. He lives in Oberlin, Ohio. In January 2014, Ali was a featured writer for *Harriet*.

Avik Chanda, graduated from Presidency College and completed his education at the Delhi School of Economics. Following a brief stint in media, he has pursued a career in management consulting over the last ten years, during which time he has also been moonlighting as a freelance journalist, painter and more recently, a poet, writing in both English and his native Bengali. His debut novel *Anchor*, presenting 1990s Calcutta has received critical and popular acclaim.

Bina Sarkar Elias, is Editor, Designer and Publisher of International Gallerie, a global arts and ideas journal founded by her in 1997. Ellias began early in life as a freelance writer for Desmond Doig's Junior Statesman, and was employed as assistant editor. International Gallerie was conceived and founded by Bina Sarkar Ellias in 1997, as a platform for addressing universal socio-political/cultural issues as interpreted through the arts, and ideas. Engaged in community building issues which she addresses in Gallerie, she received a Fellowship in 2007 from the Asia Leadership Fellow Program and Japan Foundation for research and development of the project: Unity in Diversity: Envisioning Community Building in Asia and Beyond, and the Times Group Yami Women Achiever's award in 2008. She recently received another Woman Achiever's award in Editing and Publishing from FICCI/FLO's Aparajita wing in April 2013. She also dabbles in poetry, her two collections 'The Room' and 'Fuse' have been published in UK and United States

AKLF 2016 Partners and Associations:

The AKLF 2016 edition has forged several new, prestigious associations, following its impressive collaborations in first year in 2010. We are proud to welcome on board both our new and regular partners including the Victoria Memorial Hall, Indian Museum, Australian High Commission, Embassy of Italy in India, Bloody Scotland, British Council, Calcutta Debating Circle, Crime Writers Festival, Embassy of Israel in India, Alliance Française, Portugal Embassy, Presidency University, Jaipur Literary Festival, Yes Foundation, FACES, Open Doors, FREED, The Creative Arts, Poetry Paradigm, MAKAIAS, Tollygunge Club, Max Muller Bhavan - Goethe Institute, The Park, Modern High School for Girls, Rakshak Foundation, Aishee, Streets of Calcutta, Calcutta Instagrammers, Wikipedia, Caravan, BEE books, Gibl.in, Bulk Email SMS India, Presto, She and Griffith Review. We also have 91.9 friends FM as radio partner, The Times of India as Print Media Partner, Anderson as Printing Partner, Selvel as Outdoor Partner, Typhoo as Refreshment Partner, Mera Tiffin as Food Partner, Indismart and Anon Production as special partners. A wide cross section of publishers, which include Niyogi Publishers, Future Publishers, OM Books and others will showcase their authors at AKLF 2016. AKLF is proud of these associations and hope they keep growing year on year.

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