



Press Note:

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2016 – Day 3

Event: Caravan Conversation: The Cosmopolitan Writer
Launch of *'The Cosmopolitans'* the new novel by Anjum Hasan

Kolkata, 16th January, 2016: Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2016 hosted the launch of *'The Cosmopolitans'* penned by **Anjum Hasan**, followed by a conversation with **Saikat Mazumdar**, Professor of modern and contemporary world literature against the picturesque background of the Western Quadrangle of Victoria Memorial. The book was released by **Kalyan Ray**, writer and Professor of Literature, who graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

The central idea of *The Cosmopolitans* is art and the way it is related today, a subject that has been possibly better examined in western literature than Indian. The book is leavened with enough wit and irony to make for an engaging, uplifting read. As intense and cerebral the book offers constant surprises. It functions as a repository of ideas, following the thought processes of various characters. Through the central character, Anjum Hasan has created a protagonist worth reading.

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 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

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.

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 *Eastwards* (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.

Saikat Majumdar is an assistant professor in Rutgers University, Stratford. He specializes in modern and contemporary world literature in English. His book, *Prose of the World* (Columbia UP & Orient Blackswan 2013, paperback 2015), a finalist for the Modernist Studies Association's Annual Book Prize for 2014, explores the aesthetic and political significance of the ordinary in modern and contemporary fiction from Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa and India. His work has been published in *Modern Fiction Studies*, *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, *James Joyce Quarterly*, *Cambridge History of the Indian English Novel*, *Genre*, *Studies in the Novel*, *The Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies*, *College English* and in other venues. He is also the author of a novel *Silverfish* (HarperCollins India, 2007). His second novel, *The Firebird*, was published in June 2015 and has been excerpted in *The Kenyon Review*, *World Literature Today*, and *Scroll*. Saikat is currently working on a book titled *The Amateur*, which is a study of the literary public intellectual from the global British Empire as an amateur and autodidactic figure.

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, Indisart 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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