

**Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2017 presents  
the second edition of 'Poetry Café' at its eighth edition  
in a tribute to Bob Dylan**

**Kolkata, 15th January, 2017:** Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival's second edition of **Poetry Café**, from 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> January, was held at St. Paul Cathedral Grounds. The Cafe featured one on one sessions with eminent national and international poets.

**Jan 15 - Bashabi Fraser**, well-known UK based poet and translator and **Neal Hall**, an American poet of international acclaim, graced the Café' and were introduced by Sanjeev Chopra and Debasish Lahiri respectively.

**Jan 16 - Italian poet Alessandro Lutman**, graced the café and was introduced by Ashoke Viswanathan followed by poetry from city poets **Anjana Basu, Avik Chanda, Ananya Chatterjee and Debasish Lahiri**

**Jan 17** – A mesmerizing **Open Mic** session, coordinated by **Aditya Sengupta and Kheya** took place. **Anita Nair** and **Jerry Pinto** graced the café' introduced by Joie Bose and Arthur Cardozo respectively with a homage to the dearly departed singer songwriter Leonard Cohen.

As a part of tribute to Bob Dylan there was a special session of poetry with musical accompaniments. With Bob Dylan winning the Nobel Prize for his lyrics, the world of poetry is now open to so many new possibilities which the Poetry Café sought to discover and celebrate. The café concept is specially conceptualized to make the ambience informal and encourages face to face interactions with established and aspiring poets. Festival Director Anjum Katyal said, *"Poetry can be considered the soul of literature. At AKLF we dreamt of an intimate, interactive and welcoming space dedicated to poetry where established and aspiring poets could meet and engage with each other. A space for listening, responding, conversations and readings. Poetry Café is that space."*

Poetry, which is the oldest form of literature has not got its share of the limelight and glory that is often bestowed on fiction. So the Kolkata's first literary festival, Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival felt the need to celebrate the subtle art of poetry writing by creating a space which was exclusively for poets and by poets. Poetry Café was first introduced in AKLF's 2016 edition and took it forward in 2017 hosted on St. Paul's Cathedral grounds.

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**Notes to Editors**

**About AKLF**

Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival is India's first major literary initiative of the year, India's only literary festival created by a bookstore and Kolkata's first literary festival. AKLF's eighth edition from Jan 15– 18 is woven around conversations to make the world a more inclusive place. Spotlighting Kolkata's unique

cultural heritage of inclusiveness, the programme of AKLF 2017 was announced aboard a cruise on the banks of the Ganges. Created by the nearly 100 year old Oxford Bookstore, the Festival programming spans the entire spectrum of inclusion, from women and children to the underprivileged, including a tribute to the late Mahasweta Devi who brought the most marginalized into the fold of literature. The era of Post Truth, where facts are fast losing out to rhetoric, the reality globally, will be discussed by experts; as will be the impact of different media on our reality today. Every evening for three days, AKLF will pay tribute to Nobel Laureate Bob Dylan through poetry and contemporary music at Poetry Café and Plug in, hosted at the festival's main venue – St. Paul's Cathedral grounds – chosen for its welcoming, accessible and inclusive nature. For the first time, Oxford Bookstores will host Oxford Junior Literary Festival (OJLF), a two-day festival to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Jan for young readers. Renowned children's authors, publishers of children's books, storytelling and creativity will form part of OJLF. This year, AKLF has tied up with UNICEF@70 to conduct its global short stories campaign titled "Tiny Stories" at OJLF. AKLF 2017 will be held at St Paul's Cathedral, established in 1847, and Oxford Bookstore, established in 1919. The festival's closing event will be hosted at St John's Church, built in 1787. The Festival conversations will also be hosted at Royal Calcutta Turf Club, Tollygunge Club, the campus of iLead & Presidency University, Daga Nikunj and the Harrington Street Arts Centre. .

#### **AKLF 2017 Partners and Associations:**

The AKLF 2017 edition has forged several new, prestigious associations, to add to its impressive repertoire of collaborations since the first edition in 2010. We are proud to have as our partners major national and international institutions and corporates such as the Australian Council for the Arts, Alliance Française, Australian High Commission, Instituto Cervantes, Consulate General of Italy, MAKAIAS, Presidency University, Future Hope, UNICEF, The Teacher's Centre, Jaipur Literary Festival, Sahitya Akademi, Development Corporation Limited (DCL), Vivada Cruises, FACES, Open Doors, The Creative Arts, Zoomcar, Art Rickshaw, Times Fibrefill, Aishee, Sienna and several others. A wide cross section of publishers like Niyogi Books, Future, Oxford University Press, Tulika, Duckbill, NBDS The Book Council are also partnering with us. Venue partners include Tollygunge Club, iLead, Harrington Street Art Centre, Alka Jalan Foundation and Royal Calcutta Turf Club. We welcome 93.5 Red FM as our radio partner, Vistara as aviation partner, Typhoo as beverage partner, Kenilworth as hospitality partner, Apollo Gleneagles Hospitals as wellness partner. AKLF is very proud of these associations and hopes to keep growing year on year.

#### **About Oxford Bookstores:**

Established in 1919, Oxford Bookstore is the best equipped 'base-camp' for journeys of the mind offering its customers the widest range of outstanding titles and consistently courteous and informed service for close to a century. Today, with stores in major metros, India's first dedicated Children's bookstore, Oxford Junior, India's first of its kind tea boutique, Cha Bar, India's only literary festival created by a bookstore, Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival, Oxford Bookstore offers booklovers access to the very best in publishing enhanced by a variety of events which salute books, visual & performing arts and celebrate the word. Oxford Bookstore measures its success by the smiles on millions of happy customers that the brand has served over the last nearly 100 years. There are a few treats as sumptuous as a visit to Oxford Bookstore in India. Each time you walk into our iconic store in Kolkata where the brand started in 1919, its charm leaves you wanting for more. Our fleet of happy to help expert booksellers and informed hosts work day and night to bring to customers world class reading experience be it through our books or our fine teas and live by the brand's motto - Much more than a bookstore – at every Bookstore. For more information, please also log on to: [www.oxfordbookstore.com](http://www.oxfordbookstore.com)

## **Bios**

**Debashish Lahiri:** Professor of English Literature at Lal Baba College (affiliated to University of Calcutta), he has also taught at various universities like University of Calcutta, Rabindra Bharati University and West Bengal State University. His interest areas are Postcolonial theory, African and Australian Poetry and European Modernism. His first book of poems *First Will and Testament* was published from Writer's Workshop. His poems have been published in various journals like *The Journal of the Poetry Society of India*, *Muse India*, *Indian Literature*, *Inkapture* and *The Poetry Slazburg Review*. *No Waiting Like Departure* is his recent release.

**Neal Hall:** Internationally acclaimed poet who stresses on social and racial issues. A medical practitioner turned poet, he is an award-winning author of four books of poetry. *Nigger For Life*, *The Appalling Silence*, (with selections of his work translated into Telugu and Urdu, was published and launched in India), *Where Do I Sit* are some of his most notable works.

**Bashabi Fraser:** A poet, children's writer, translator and editor, she is the joint director of the Scottish Centre of Tagore studies and teaches English and creative writing at Edinburgh Napier University.

**Alessandro Lutman:** Young Italian poet. He published his first work - *Poesie d'autunno. Raccontandomi in versi* - in 2015 as a 20 year old, becoming one of the youngest poets of his country. He presented his works in Algeria, Denmark, France and Russia. He is studying Literature and History in Udine and writes about literature in regional cultural magazines.

**Jerry Pinto:** Mumbai-based poet, prose and children's fiction writer, journalist. Pinto writes in English, and his works include, *Helen: The Life and Times of an H-Bomb* (2006) which won the Best Book on Cinema Award at the 54th National Film Awards, *Surviving Women* (2000) and *Asylum and Other Poems* (2003). His first novel *Em and The Big Hoom* was published in 2012 for which he won the Windham-Campbell prize in 2016. This also won the Sahitya Akademi award in 2016

**Ananya Chatterjee:** Poet and a software professional (gold medalist from Calcutta University) she has published three books, *The Poet and His Valentine*, *Another Soliloquy* and *A Blind Man's Rainbow*. Her works have been published both nationally and internationally. She is also a translator for works of Soumitro Chatterjee and Jogen Chowdhury. She holds the post of Treasurer of the poetry group, *Poetry Paradigm*.

**Anjana Basu:** Fiction writer, poet. She has also written stories for local newspapers and *Cosmopolitan*. Her work has been published by Orient Longman India, Penguin India, *The Wolfhead Quarterly*, *The Blue Moon Review*, *Recursive Angel* etc. Her novel *Curses in Ivory* was published by Harper Collins in 2003. She has been awarded the Hawthornden Fellow. She also writes for young adults, which includes her most recent work, *Leopard in the Laboratory*. She has also worked on scripts with director Rituparno Ghosh for '*Antarmahal*' and '*The Last Lear*' and has subtitled several of his films including '*Unishe April*', '*Dahan*' and '*Chokher Bali*'.

**Joie Bose:** Poet and a student of literature from SXC and JNU, she has been writing for over fifteen years, her first book of poems *Corazon Roto and Sixty Nine Other Treasons* was published in 2015 and individual works have been published both nationally and internationally. Professionally an educator, she is attached

to Jadavpur University, TIU, SMU, Bangabasi College. She is the General Secretary of Poetry Paradigm and is currently editing a book of short stories on Calcutta entitled Calcuttadotes.

**Ashoke Viswanathan:** A filmmaker and a theatre practitioner has made many award winning films including documentaries. He has been an Assistant Director at Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute and a guest lecturer at Jadavpur University. His films include an array of films like The Lighthouse, The Ocean and The Sea, Shunya Theke Shuru, Kichu Songlap Kichu Prolap. He also has experience as a Chairperson of the Jury non-feature films for the National Film Awards. He is the President of Poetry Paradigm.

**Avik Chanda:** Poet and novelist. He 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.

**Anita Nair:** An author, best known for her fiction and poetry. Her novels The Better Man and Ladies Coupe are bestselling works and have been translated in twenty one languages. Chain of Custody (2016) dealing with child trafficking is her most recent work.

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**For more information, please contact:**