

Media Release

August 1, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STARFest announces a star-studded 2024 festival lineup

ST. ALBERT—STARFest Readers Festival is thrilled to announce its festival line-up for 2024, featuring an exciting range of authors whose new books offer something for book lovers of all reading interests. Save these dates now. Tickets are on sale now at starfest.ca.

“We have another fantastic lineup for the festival – six incredible authors across six events October 17- 28,” says Festival Director Julie Ruel. “STARFest audiences are made up of avid readers who will be delighted to see some of their festival favourites return with new books, and to discover some amazing new voices, too.”

The event will also be an opportunity for audiences to meet the new STARFest Director and Programs Librarian, Julie Ruel. “I’m excited to take on the STARFest role and bring exciting authors to St. Albert readers,” says Ruel.



Kevin Chong | Thursday, Oct. 17 | 7 PM
In conversation with David Berry

2023 Scotiabank Giller Prize Finalist Kevin Chong is the author of seven books of fiction and nonfiction, most recently the novel *The Double Life of Benson Yu*, which was named a Best Book of Canadian Fiction by the CBC. *The Double Life of Benson Yu* tells the story of twelve-year-old Benny, his ailing grandmother, and his strange neighbor Constantine, a man who believes he’s a reincarnated medieval samurai. When his grandmother is hospitalized, Benny manages to survive on his own until a social worker comes snooping. With no other family, he is reluctantly taken in by Constantine and soon, an unlikely bond forms between the two.

Guy Vanderhaeghe | Friday, Oct. 18 | 7 PM
In conversation with Senator Paula Simons

Guy Vanderhaeghe is the author of five novels, four collections of short stories, two plays, one teleplay, and one collection of nonfiction. He is a three-time winner of the Governor’s-General Award for English language fiction for his collections of short stories, *Man Descending* and *Daddy Lenin*, and for his novel *The Englishman’s Boy*, which was also shortlisted for the Giller Prize and



The International Dublin Literary Award. His novel, *The Last Crossing*, was a winner of the CBC's Canada Reads Competition. His most recent work is a collection of nonfiction, *Because Somebody Asked Me To*, which has all the hallmarks of Guy Vanderhaeghe's fiction: it is intelligent, wise, often humorous, and a pleasure to read. *Because Somebody Asked Me To* addresses a variety of subjects, including the craft of fiction, growing up on the prairies, and Vanderhaeghe's struggle to find his own voice as a writer.



Elizabeth Hay | Sunday, Oct. 20 | 2 PM
In conversation with Writer In Residence Katie Bickell

Elizabeth Hay is the Giller-Prize winning author of six novels, including *Late Nights on Air*, *His Whole Life*, and *A Student of Weather*. Her memoir about her parents, *All Things Consoled*, won the Hilary Weston Writers' Prize for Nonfiction. A former radio broadcaster with the CBC, she spent a number of years in Mexico and New York City, and makes her home in Ottawa.

At the heart of Hay's newest novel, *Snow Road Station*, is the friendship between Lulu and Nan, now in their sixties and contemplating what to make of the rest of their lives.



Rose Sutherland | Thursday, Oct. 24 | 7 PM
In conversation with Diana Davidson

Embracing romantic motifs of nature and the elements, as well as folktales and the supernatural, Sutherland's character-driven historical fiction centers LGBTQ people in the day-to-day life of the past. Influenced by an early love of classic literature, her stories examine themes of loneliness, isolation, and the secrets we keep from each other and ourselves: how they protect us and hold us back, seen through the eyes of women strong and smart enough to save themselves and those they love...and passionate enough to be their own biggest obstacle along the way. Sutherland's novel, *A Sweet*

Sting of Salt, tells the tale of a young woman in 19th century Nova Scotia who uncovers a magical secret about her neighbour, she'll have to fight to keep the truth—and the woman she loves—safe in this stunning queer reimagining of the classic folktale *The Selkie Wife*.



Claudia Dey | Saturday, Oct. 26 | 7 PM
In conversation with Jana Pruden

Claudia Dey's most recent novel, *Daughter*, was an instant national bestseller, named a *New York Times* Fall Fiction pick, an *Elle Magazine* Book of the Year, and a *Globe and Mail* Best Book. She is also the author of *Heartbreaker*, a Northern Lit and Trillium Book Award finalist, currently being adapted for television. Her plays have been produced internationally, and have been nominated for the Governor General's, Dora and Trillium Book Awards. *Daughter* was named a Most Anticipated Book at *The New York Times*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Elle*

Magazine, *Literary Hub*, *The Millions*, and the CBC. *Daughter* is a searing and hypnotic tour de force about a woman, long caught in her charismatic father's web, who strives to make a life—and art—of her own.



Conor Kerr | Monday, Oct. 28 | 7 PM
In conversation with Jordan Abel

The Giller Prize-longlisted author of *Avenue of Champions* returns with a frenetic, propulsive crime thriller that doubles as a sharp critique of modern activism and challenges readers to consider what “Land Back” might really look like. *Prairie Edge* tells the story of two distant Métis cousins making the most of Grey's uncle's old trailer, passing their days playing endless games of cribbage and cracking cans of cheap beer in between. Grey, once a passionate advocate for change, has been hardened and turned cynical by an activist culture she thinks has turned performative and lazy. One night, though, she

has a revelation, and enlists Ezzy, who is hopelessly devoted to her but eager to avoid the authorities after a life in and out of the group home system and jail, for a bold yet dangerous political mission: capture a herd of bison from a national park and set them free in downtown Edmonton, disrupting the churn of settler routine.

For readers drawn to the electric storytelling of Morgan Talty and the taut register of Stephen Graham Jones, *Prairie Edge* is at once a gripping, darkly funny caper and a raw reckoning with the wounds that persist across generations.

Tickets to all events are \$7 and are held in Forsyth Hall at SAPL's Downtown Library and are followed by audience conversation and book signings. Purchase tickets at starfest.ca.

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For more information or to set up interviews with festival authors or Julie Ruel, contact:

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