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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STARFest returns with a star-studded 2022 festival lineup

ST. ALBERT — STARFest (St. Albert Readers Festival) returns for its 12th season with a star-studded slate of authors over three weeks from October 13 to 28, and we're excited to return to an in-person festival. The 2022 lineup features prizewinning authors and bestselling, powerful books by authors you know and love, and authors you'll always remember discovering at STARFest. Save these dates now, and watch for tickets to go on sale on August 15.

"We're thrilled to be able to again offer the intimate, in-person events that STARFest audiences love," says Festival Director Michelle Steinhuisen. "This year's lineup is fantastic. We've got a range of voices and reads to make our audiences think, laugh, learn, and – in some cases – want to leave the lights on at bedtime."

Omar El Akkad | Thursday, Oct. 13 | 7 PM

In Omar El Akkad's Giller Prize-winning *What Strange Paradise*, more bodies have washed up on the shores of a small island. Another over-filled, ill-equipped, dilapidated ship has sunk under the weight of its too many passengers. And only one has made the passage: nine-year-old Amir, a Syrian boy who has the good fortune to fall into the hands not of the officials but of Vanna: a teenage girl, native to the island. A beautifully written and profoundly moving novel.

Zarqa Nawaz | Sunday, Oct. 16 | 2 PM

Zarqa Nawaz is the creator of the hit CBC series *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, and we're thrilled to have her at STARFest with *Jameela Green Ruins Everything*, a hilarious satire about a disillusioned American Muslim woman who becomes embroiled in a plot to infiltrate an international terrorist organization and, in the process, reconnects with her loved ones and her faith.

Genevieve Graham | Tuesday, Oct. 18 | 7 PM

We're delighted to bring back crowd-pleaser Genevieve Graham with her new novel, *Bluebird*, a dazzling story set during the Great War and postwar Prohibition about a young nurse, a soldier, and a family secret that binds them together for generations. Weaving between the past and the present, *Bluebird* is a compelling, luminous novel about the strength of the human spirit and the power of love to call us home.

Donna Morrissey | Thursday, Oct. 20 | 7 PM

Pluck is a deeply personal memoir, told with charm and humour, of love's restorative ability as it leads renowned novelist Donna Morrissey through mental illness, family death, and despair to becoming a writer. Morrissey layers her account of her life with stories of those who came before her, a breed rarely seen in the modern world. It centers around iron-willed women: mothers and daughters, wives, sisters, teachers and mentors. And it is a mysterious older woman she meets in Halifax who eventually unleashes the writer that Morrissey is destined to become.

Clayton Thomas-Müller | Friday, Oct. 21 | 7 PM

Life in the City of Dirty Water is a gritty and inspiring memoir from renowned Cree environmental activist Clayton Thomas-Müller, who escaped the world of drugs and gang life to take up the warrior's fight against the assault on Indigenous peoples' lands—and eventually the warrior's spirituality. Tying together personal stories of survival that bring the realities of the First Nations of this land into sharp focus, and lessons learned as a frontline activist, Thomas-Müller offers a narrative and vision of healing and responsibility.

Heather O'Neill | Monday, Oct. 24 | 7 PM

Heather O'Neill is the bestselling author of *The Lonely Hearts Hotel*, and we're excited for her return to STARFest with *When We Lost Our Heads*, a spellbinding story about two young women whose friendship is so intense it not only threatens to destroy them, it changes the course of history. *When We Lost Our Heads* is a page-turning novel that explores gender and power, sex and desire, class and status, and the terrifying strength of the human heart when it can't let someone go.

Ian Williams | Tuesday, Oct. 25 | 7 PM

Poet, novelist and essayist Ian Williams is a Giller Prize-winning writer who brings fresh eyes and new insights to today's urgent conversation on race and racism. *Disorientation* is a series of startling, illuminating essays that grow out of his own experience as a Black man moving through the world. Examining the past and the present in order to speak to the future, he offers new thinking, honest feeling, and his astonishing, piercing gift of language.

J.M. Miro (aka Steven Price) | Date TBA

Ordinary Monsters is a stunning new work of historical fantasy by acclaimed author Steven Price, writing here as J. M. Miro. In Victorian London, two children with mysterious powers are hunted by a figure of darkness—a man made of smoke. Riveting in its scope and exquisitely written, *Ordinary Monsters* presents a catastrophic vision of the Victorian world—and of the gifted, broken children who must save it.

“We're proud to bring world-class authors to St. Albert through STARFest and to bring our audiences the engaging, provocative events that make our festival stand out,” says Peter Bailey, CEO of St. Albert Public Library. “Libraries are about people and STARFest does a great job of bringing communities together.”

We're working on a fantastic lineup of STARFest hosts to keep the questions and the conversation flowing with the authors. Check STARFest.ca for all the details, save these important dates now, and watch for ticket sales to go live on August 15.

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