



Media Contacts:

Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation/Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival

David Mayhew, david@davidmayhew.net or 203-533-5621

New Jersey Performing Arts Center

Angela Thomas, athomas@njpac.org or 201-503-1333

**Dodge Poetry Festival Announces Highlights of the Upcoming Four-Day Event
at NJPAC and Newark's Downtown Arts District**

150+ events during Oct. 18-21 Festival include Poetry Samplers with multiple poets in back-to-back readings, Main Stage Readings and Krista Tippett recording poet interviews for her Peabody Award-winning public radio show "On Being"

Tickets are now on sale

For release September 10, 2018

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY – Martin Farawell, Director of the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival, has announced highlights of the upcoming 17th biennial four-day event, October 18-21, featuring bestselling authors, literary legends, Pulitzer Prize winners, slam champions, and Academy of American Poets Chancellors.

Former U.S. Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera, Pulitzer Prize-winners Sharon Olds and Gregory Pardlo, as well as much-published and award-winning poets Sandra Cisneros, Sapphire, Eileen Myles, Ntozake Shange, Kwame Dawes, Alberto Ríos, David St. John, Henri Cole, Gregory Orr, Mary Ruefle and David Young will be giving Featured Readings during the Festival and are among the dozens of acclaimed poets who will participate in the four-day event, which takes place at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) and other venues in Newark's Downtown Arts District from Thursday, October 18 through Sunday, October 21, 2018.

"We often reach for poetry when words fail us," said Mr. Farawell. "We've all had that experience, at a wedding, christening, graduation or funeral, of being so moved we can't speak. It's universal. It's where poems come from. That's why bringing together poets with diverse personal histories and perspectives is at the heart of our programming. We need to be reminded of our shared humanity. That happens at every Dodge Poetry Festival."

The Festival's more than 150 poetry events over four days include these highlights:

Thursday, October 18:

- Afternoon **Poetry Sampler** with back-to-back short readings by Jan Beatty, Jericho Brown, Tina Chang, Sandra Cisneros, Henri Cole, Kwame Dawes, Juan Felipe Herrera, David Hinton, Eileen Myles, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, Sharon Olds, Gregory Orr, Gregory Pardlo, Mary Ruefle, Sapphire, Rachel Wiley, David Young and more.
- Evening **Academy of American Poets Chancellors' Reading**, part of the organization's annual **Poets Forum**, with Elizabeth Alexander (President Obama's first inaugural poet), Ellen Bass, Marilyn Chin, Kwame Dawes, Forrest Gander, Linda Gregerson, Brenda Hillman, Marie Howe, Khaled Mattawa, Marilyn Nelson, Alicia Ostriker, Alberto Ríos and David St. John.

Friday, October 19:

- Krista Tippett records an afternoon interview with poet Jericho Brown for later broadcast on **"On Being,"** her popular, Peabody Award-winning public radio program and podcast.
- Evening **Main Stage Readings** by Jan Beatty, Henri Cole, Kwame Dawes, Gregory Pardlo and Sapphire.

Saturday, October 20:

- **"The Beloved: A Poem and Song Cycle"** in the afternoon featuring Gregory Orr and musicians/vocalists Parkington Sisters. The world premiere of a collaborative piece conceived and composed for the 2018 Festival.
- Krista Tippett interviews Gregory Orr for **"On Being"** as well as afternoon **Main Stage Readings** by Sandra Cisneros, Mary Ruefle and David Young.
- **"In Praise: A Hundred Ways to Kneel and Kiss the Earth,"** a music and poetry performance invitation to share gratitude across race, gender, belief system, age, and sexual preference, with Jan Beatty, Jericho Brown, Sandra Cisneros, Henri Cole, Kwame Dawes, Ross Gay, Rigoberto González, Juan Felipe Herrera, David Hinton, Joy Ladin, Joseph O. Legaspi, Eileen Myles, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, Sharon Olds, Rachel Wiley and the Newark Boys Chorus.

Sunday, October 21:

- An afternoon **Special Event: In Conversation with Ntozake Shange.**
- Krista Tippett interviewing Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Sharon Olds for **"On Being."**
- **Main Stage Readings** by Juan Felipe Herrera, Eileen Myles, Sharon Olds and Ntozake Shange.

Called "Wordstock" by *The New York Times*, the Dodge Poetry Festival is a celebration of poetry that immerses participants in four days of readings, performances, and conversations with acclaimed poets. This year marks the fifth time the Festival will be held in Newark's walkable Downtown Arts District. The Festival debuted in 1986 at Waterloo Village, part of a state park in northern New Jersey.

"Poetry doesn't care where you were born, who your parents were, which side of the tracks (or any other border) you grew up on, doesn't care about your race or sex or what you believe in or who you do or don't sleep with, or how much you earn," said Preston D. Pinkett III, Chair of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation's Board of Trustees. "It invites us all to move in a little closer, to listen to each other a little more attentively, to enter someone else's point of view, if only for a little while. In a time when language is abused to divide us, we need poetry to remind us that language is here to bring us together. There's no better place to learn this, to be reminded of it and celebrate it than at the Dodge Poetry Festival."

Anchored by events at NJPAC, the Festival takes place on as many as nine stages simultaneously in venues and cultural destinations throughout the city, including Rutgers-Newark's Express Newark arts incubator in the recently-renovated and re-opened Hahne and Co. building, First Peddie Baptist Memorial Church, the New Jersey Historical Society, the Newark Museum, North Star Academy, Trinity & St. Philip's Cathedral and Military Park. Evening and Sunday afternoon readings take place in NJPAC's Prudential Hall.

"Poetry is vitally important, in so many ways — not least because these days, poetry is the gateway to the arts for many young people," says John Schreiber, President and CEO of NJPAC. "Poetry — whether in free verse, the bars of a rap song, or the structure of a sonnet — empowers teens to speak their heart and their truth. And the only tools they need are a pencil and a passion to be heard. That's why NJPAC is thrilled to welcome the Dodge Poetry Festival back to Newark this fall."

Readings and conversations will take on a broad set of topics, and are designed so that everyone, whether they are a literary scholar, beginner or just curious will hear something that speaks to them.

The 2018 Dodge Poetry Festival marks the second time the renowned Academy of American Poets will integrate its annual Poets Forum into the Festival, bringing together their Board of Chancellors for readings and conversations. Participating Chancellors include Elizabeth Alexander, President Obama's first inaugural poet; McArthur Fellowship "genius grant" recipient Khaled Mattawa; as well as acclaimed poets Ellen Bass, Marilyn Chin, Kwame Dawes, Forrest Gander, Linda Gregerson, Brenda Hillman, Marie Howe, Marilyn Nelson, Alicia Ostriker, Alberto Ríos and David St. John.

The 2018 recipients of the Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowship, a program for U.S. citizens or residents ages 21-31, will also perform their first readings as Fellows. The Fellowships, established in 1989 to encourage the further study and writing of poetry, are sponsored by the Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine.

The full Festival poet lineup, the complete 2018 Dodge Poetry Festival program, and other events leading up to the Festival will be posted on the Dodge Poetry Program website, www.DodgePoetry.org. The Poetry Blog, featuring interviews with Festival poets in the "Ask a Poet" series, can be found on the website.

Once again, as a key component of the Dodge Foundation's commitment to healthy communities, the Festival will partner with Clean Water Action to make the event a zero-waste event and NJ TRANSIT to make public transportation more affordable for Festival-goers.

More than 600 poets, including Nobel Laureates and U.S. Poets Laureate, Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award winners, Guggenheim, Fulbright, MacArthur and National Endowment for the Arts fellows, and an unparalleled array of widely-published and award-winning poets, have been part of the Festival in its 32-year history.

Tickets and NJ TRANSIT Train Vouchers

Poetry Passes offering Single Day, Weekend or Four Day full Festival admission are available now. Prices for a Weekend Poetry Pass (Saturday and Sunday admission) are \$70, with discounted admission available at \$63 for seniors and teachers with ID, and \$35 for students and Newark residents. Four Day Poetry Passes providing entry to all events at the Festival, Thursday through Sunday, are \$110, with discounted admission for seniors and teachers at \$99 and students and Newark residents at \$55. Single Day Poetry Passes are \$50, with discounted admission for seniors and teachers at \$45 and students and Newark residents at \$25. Tickets are available at the NJPAC Box Office, 1 Center Street, Newark NJ, online at www.njpac.org or by phone at 1-888-GO-NJPAC.

NJ TRANSIT is offering \$10.50 per day ticket vouchers for Festival participants for a round-trip ticket from any NJ TRANSIT rail station to Newark Penn Station or Newark Broad Street Station. The voucher will also be honored on the Newark Light Rail once riders arrive in Newark. Vouchers can be purchased with Festival tickets online, over the phone, or at the NJPAC Box Office.

For regularly updated information about the 2018 Dodge Poetry Festival, visit www.DodgePoetry.org and join the Poetry Program's e-mail list. Find the Festival (#DPF18) on social media:

Facebook: Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival
Twitter: @DodgePoetryFest
Instagram: @dodgepoetry

About the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival

The Dodge Poetry Festival was the first large-scale event to put poetry itself at its center and to invite poets and audiences from a wide base of the culture. Poets who have participated in the Festival have included Nobel Laureates Octavio Paz and Derek Walcott as well as U.S. Poets Laureate Billy Collins, Rita Dove, Donald Hall, Robert Hass, Juan Felipe Herrera, Ted Kooser, Maxine Kumin, Stanley Kunitz, W.S. Merwin, Robert Pinsky, Charles Simic, Philip Levine, Kay Ryan, Tracy K. Smith, Mark Strand and Natasha Trethewey. Gwendolyn Brooks, Stephen Dunn, Jorie Graham, Galway Kinnell, Carolyn Kizer, Yusef Komunyakaa, W.S. Merwin, Sharon Olds, Mary Oliver, Gary Snyder, Richard Wilbur, C.K. Williams and Franz Wright are among the Pulitzer Prize winners who have been featured at past Festivals. The remarkable diversity of voices and styles has also included Yehuda Amichai, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Richard Blanco, Lucille Clifton, Kwame Dawes, Mark Doty, Martín Espada, Joy Harjo, Ko Un, Li-Young Lee, Dunya Mikhail, Claudia Rankine, Patricia Smith, Sekou Sundiata and Arthur Sze.

The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation's Poetry Program operates throughout the school year, sending poets into classrooms across New Jersey and offering poetry discussion groups for teachers. During each Festival, thousands of students and teachers explore the intimate connection between poets and poetry and develop a greater understanding of the art form and of the power of self-expression by hearing poetry performed by its creators. Over the years, the Festival has welcomed nearly 55,000 high school students, all of whom attend free of charge, from as far away as Florida, Maine, Minnesota, and California. Over 20,000 teachers have participated in special programs offered at the Festival and have had the opportunity to receive professional development credits. Audience members have come to the Festival from 43 states as well as many other countries throughout the world.

The Dodge Poetry Festival has been featured extensively in five PBS television series, including Bill Moyers' Emmy-winning, multi-part series *The Language of Life* and *Fooling with Words*. Excerpts of readings from the Festival are routinely aired on PBS through the series *Poetry Everywhere* with Garrison Keillor and over 100 short readings can be seen on Dodge's YouTube channel. To read the Poetry Program's popular Poetry Fridays blog and find more information about the Festival, visit www.dodgepoetry.org.

About the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation

Based in Morristown, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation is working to build an equitable New Jersey through creative, engaged, sustainable communities. For more than 40 years, the Foundation has nurtured the nonprofit sector, supported leaders, and facilitated partnerships and initiatives to address issues critical to our home state of New Jersey. It currently funds initiatives and non-profit organizations in Arts, Education, Environment, Informed Communities, and Poetry which are innovative and promote collaboration and community-driven decision making. Learn more at www.grdodge.org.

About NJPAC

New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), located in downtown Newark, N.J., is among the largest performing arts centers in the United States and is the artistic, cultural, educational and civic center of New Jersey – where great performances and events enhance and transform lives every day. NJPAC brings diverse communities together, providing access to all and showcasing the state’s and the world’s best artists while acting as a leading catalyst in the revitalization of its home city. Through its extensive Arts Education programs, NJPAC is shaping the next generation of artists and arts enthusiasts. NJPAC has attracted nearly 10 million visitors (including more than 1.7 million children) since opening its doors in 1997, and nurtures meaningful and lasting relationships with each of its constituents.

###