

Welcome to Writers at the Convent!

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Following on from our hugely successful inaugural year at the Abbotsford Convent last year, we would like to welcome you to Writers at the Convent 2009, Melbourne's summer celebration of reading, writing, books and ideas.

Brought to you by Reader's Feast Bookstore, this major event on Melbourne's literary calendar combines one of this city's best arts venues with the team that has brought you some of the most successful writers' and readers' events ever staged in this country to produce a real treat for thinkers and book lovers alike.

We hope you enjoy what we have put together for you and we look forward to catching up with you over the course of what will be a thoroughly stimulating and entertaining weekend.



ROBERT DREWE

THE VENUE

The Abbotsford Convent is an extraordinary place and is one of the most important arts, educational and cultural precincts in Melbourne. Just 4 kilometres from Melbourne's CBD, its 11 historic buildings, gardens and



PETER GOLDSWORTHY

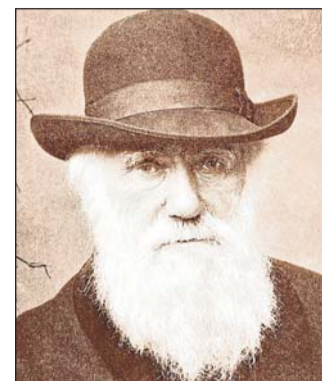
car park are spread over 6.8 hectares in a sweeping bend in the Yarra River and are surrounded by the Collingwood Children's Farm and Yarra Bend Park. It was the perfect location for the first Writers at the Convent last year winning universal praise from



SONYA HARTNETT

audience and participants alike. We invite you to join us at this very special place and let it work its magic on you.

Writers at the Convent will use a number of venues around the site. Principle locations in use over the weekend will be the



CHARLES DARWIN

Rosina Auditorium, the Community Room, The Refectory and the Bishop's Parlour. Signage will be provided on site to allow patrons to easily find each venue. However, the site is very compact and no venue is more than a few minutes from any other.

Event producer:

Reader's Feast Bookstore

Midtown Plaza
Cnr Bourke & Swanston Sts,
Melbourne
Victoria 3000

Situated in the heart of Melbourne, we offer a comprehensive range and welcoming environment. Our staff are all dedicated booksellers, providing knowledgeable and friendly service.

T: (03) 9662 4699
F: (03) 9663 3726

E: readers@readersfeast.com.au
W: www.readersfeast.com.au

Local and international special order service.

Forthcoming major events to look out for:

A Celebration of Victorian Writing
State Library of Victoria, Queen's
Birthday Weekend, 2009

Part of The Independent Type: Books and
Writing in Victoria, 23 April to 30 August,
2009

W: www.slv.vic.gov.au

Crime and Justice

Abbotsford Convent, July 17 to 19, 2009

W: www.crimeandjusticefestival.com

Event partner

The University of Melbourne's Writing Centre for Scholars and Researchers

works with publishers, editors and literary agents to support University of Melbourne postgraduate students and academic staff to communicate their research to a broad readership. An initiative of Hilary McPhee, the centre is lead by Writers at the Convent Creative Director, Simon Clews, and has been involved in the literary careers of Helen

MacDonald, Jennifer Kloester, Idan Ben-Barak, Gabrielle Wolf, Damon Young, Beth Driscoll, Meredith Nash and Fincina Hoppood.

For more information:
www.msgr.unimelb.edu.au/writingcentre/

Personnel

Creative Programming Director
Simon Clews
General Manager
Mary Dalmau (for Reader's Feast)
Technical Manager
Benno Rentinck (for Zarnex)
Publicist
Shirley Hard-Rix
Volunteers Co-ordinator
Jane Hawtin
Official Photographer
Greg Noakes
Website Design
CDE Computer Management

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

All general enquiries should go to
Reader's Feast Bookstore:

Telephone: (03) 9662 4699

Fax: (03) 9663 3726

Email: info@writersattheconvent.com

Website: www.writersattheconvent.com

Media & Publicity Enquiries

Shirley Hardy-Rix:

Telephone: (03) 9842 9740

Mobile: 0412 057 288

Email: shirley@hardyrix.com.au

Volunteer Enquiries

To volunteer at the festival, contact:

Volunteers Co-ordinator Jane Hawtin by
email on: volunteers@writersattheconvent.com

BOOKSTORE

Writers at the Convent will feature a comprehensive bookstore at The Abbotsford Convent presented by Reader's Feast.

All available titles by all participating authors will be available for purchase at the bookstore and participants will make themselves available at the bookstore to sign copies of their work after each of their sessions.

REFRESHMENTS

There are plenty of food and beverage options within the Convent grounds:

Lentil as Anything - "Food-Culture-Community" - is a non profit incorporated association that celebrates compassion, individuality and artistic expression. Patrons pay what they feel their meal is worth, but be warned: this doesn't mean a cheap meal as the food is always extraordinarily good!

The Convent Bakery - nestled within the walls of the Convent Annexe or Kitchen Wing are two magnificent masonry wood fired ovens built in 1901 which are now used daily by the artisan bakers of The Convent Bakery.

Handsome Steve's House of Refreshment - you won't find eggs 'cooked to your liking', skinny lattes, wraps, low fat muffins or light beer at Handsome Steve's House of Refreshment. It's S for Salt, F for Fat, S for Sugar, C for Caffeine and A for Alcohol.

There will also be a number of additional food and drink outlets set up around the Convent site for the duration of Writers at the Convent.

Sponsors



* Acknowledgements:

Writers at the Convent could not take place without the support and assistance of: Abbotsford Convent Foundation, Malthouse Ticketing Services and, of course, our band of tireless volunteers!

THE PROGRAM

Friday, February 13

ROSINA AUDITORIUM

8pm Double Bill: The Naked Man and The Modern Guru Live on Stage!

Contrary to superstition, this Friday 13th will actually be a very lucky one for anyone at the Convent tonight; live on stage will be - first up - Robert Gott, whose Naked Man cartoons in The Age's EG each Friday have heralded the start to a good weekend. Then, following this clothes-optional treat - after an interval - be prepared to share your problems with The Modern Guru himself, Danny Katz. This modern day sage of the suburbs dispenses invaluable advice in the pages of The Age each weekend and tonight will be tackling your 'difficult issues' live on stage. Just send your personal problems, no matter how embarrassing or revealing, to: modernguru@writersattheconvent.com and come along on the night to hear The Modern Guru's answer.

Saturday, February 14

ROSINA AUDITORIUM

10am Stefan Faris on Climate Change

Stefan Faris, international journalist and celebrated author of Forecast, talks about the consequences of climate change, from the Amazon to the Arctic, and the complex relationships between increasingly unstable weather patterns and politics, ecology and our lifestyles. Chaired by Deb Anderson.

12 noon Peter Rodgers on the Middle East

On a subject that never ceases to be topical, former Australian ambassador to Israel and regular commentator on Middle Eastern affairs, Peter Rodgers, talks to publisher Russ Radcliffe about the Middle East.

2pm One with the Lot: Michael Leunig

There are few aspects of exis-

tence to which celebrated cartoonist and author Michael Leunig has not turned his renaissance mind - hence The Lot: In Words, his latest book. Today he talks to Jane Sullivan about life, the universe and everything.

THE COMMUNITY ROOM

10am Plundering the Past

Looking at the use of research and history to underpin their fiction will be Jenny Patrick, Claire Thomas and Anthony O'Neill. Chaired by Clare Forster.

12 noon Peter Singer on Poverty

Discussing his astonishing new book The Life You Can Save: Acting Now to End World Poverty will be the man the New Yorker said may well be "the most controversial philosopher alive," Peter Singer. Hosted by Louise Adler.

2pm Culinary Capital: The Flavours of Melbourne

Culinary biographer of the city of Melbourne, Charmaine O'Brien talks to Jude Bourguignon about the changing eating habits of Melburnians.

4pm Glittering Prizes

Talking about the effect that literary prizes have on a writer's work, as well as the world of books and writing in general, will be Miles Franklin Award winner Steven Carroll, winner of the Best Fiction Book in the Prime Minister's Literary Awards, Steven Conté, and winner of the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, the world's biggest prize for children's and youth literature, Sonya Hartnett. Chaired by Beth Driscoll.

6pm Getting Away From It All

Roger Averill escaped to a Melanesian island for a year, Marisa Raoul fled to rural France and Simon Capp tried to navigate his way through the Italian bureaucracy. They compare notes on their respective journeys under the watchful eye of Shirley Hardy-Rix, who once

went around the world on a motorcycle. Doesn't anyone go to Lorne any more?!

8pm Australian Fiction

Looking at the state of play of Australian fiction and where it might be headed will be acclaimed writers Robert Drewe, Peter Goldsworthy and Steven Carroll. Session chaired by Beth Driscoll.

THE REFECTORY

10am Unhappy Families

Lia Hills deals with a fictional dysfunctional family in her astonishing debut novel, The Beginner's Guide to Living, whereas Alison Whitelock drew on her own personal experience to write Poking Seaweed With a Stick and Running Away From the Smell. This morning they will compare notes in a session chaired by Pam Macintyre.

12 noon A Conversation with Robert Drewe

Internationally acclaimed as a novelist and memoirist, Robert Drewe, recently returned to the short-story territory he has made his own over the years with The Rip. Today he talks to Jennifer Kloester about his life and work.

2pm No Laughing Matter

Humour is one of the most powerful tools at a writer's disposal; this afternoon David Smiedt, Idan Ben-Barak and Bruce Petty talk about its role in their work. Chaired by Danielle White.

4pm Foreign Correspondent

Stefan Faris has reported from Africa, the Middle East, and China for publications including Time Magazine, Fortune Magazine, The Atlantic Monthly, and Salon.com. He has written about war in Liberia, the rise of Islamists in Somalia, genocide trials in Rwanda, oil in Nigeria, refugees from Darfur, and Internet censorship in China.

He also covered the invasion of Iraq for the New York Daily News. He is now based in Rome, where he contributes to Fortune Magazine and travels to

GETTING TO THE CONVENT

Writers at the Convent will take place at:

The Abbotsford Convent
1 St Heliers Street
Abbotsford VIC 3067
(Melway reference: 44 G5)

All the venues referred to in the program are on the Convent site.

The Convent is very easily accessed by train (Victoria Park on the Epping/Hurtsbridge line is the closest station) and by bus. The Convent web site (www.abbotsfordconvent.com.au) has full details of public transport options for getting to the convent. The Capital City cycling and walking path also passes the site.

Patrons arriving by car should note that limited all day parking is available on the north side of St Heliers Street for a minimal charge. There is also 15 minute parking on the street. However, there is no vehicular access at all to the Convent site.

Africa and China. Today he talks to Russ Radcliffe.

6pm Remarkable Beginnings # 1

This year's festival features some remarkable first-time authors, so much so that the program will feature two sessions on the subject. Tonight Steven Conté, Idan Ben-Barak and Alison Whitelock will discuss their very different processes with Jude Bourguignon.

8pm David Smiedt's Lithuanian Odyssey

Eighty-two years after his grandfather escaped from the Lithuanian hamlet of Birzai with nothing but a packed lunch, David Smiedt journeyed back to this former Soviet enclave in search of an answer to his mother-in-law's question: 'Who are your people?' He talks about this journey to the Abbotsford Convent's Maggie Maguire.

THE BISHOP'S PARLOUR

10am Why I Am Not A Scientist with Jonathan Marks

This morning Professor Jonathan Marks of the Department of Anthropology, University of North Carolina looks at the evolution of science, its role in modern culture, and its challenges for the twenty-first century. Hosted by Peter Bragge.

A Darwin/Evolution Event

12 noon Human Evolution: The Mating Mind with Geoffrey Miller

Dr Geoffrey Miller of the Psychology Department, University of New Mexico is an evolutionary psychologist best known for his research on sexual selection through mate choice and its effects on the evolution of the human mind. His talk today is hosted by Peter Bragge.

A Darwin/Evolution Event

2pm The Origins of Life with Malcolm Walter

Professor Malcolm Walter is Director of the Australian Centre for Astrobiology at the University of New South Wales; this afternoon he discusses the very dawn of evolution. Hosted by Peter Bragge.

A Darwin/Evolution Event

4pm Darwin and Literature with Michael Ruse

Professor Michael Ruse is Lucyle T. Werkmeister Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Program in History and Philosophy of Science, Florida State University. This afternoon he talks about evolution in poetry and prose and even the movies! Hosted by Peter Bragge.

A Darwin/Evolution Event

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4pm A Conversation with Shane Maloney

Murray Whelan is one of Australia's best loved literary characters and his creator, Shane Maloney, one the country's most popular and successful writers. Combining classic crime fiction and irreverent humour, any new Shane Maloney novel is an automatic must-read. Today he talks to Simon Clews about his life and work.

6pm Touching the Earth Lightly: Neil Murray

After more than two decades of writing, recording and performing, Neil Murray is one of Australia's most respected song-writers. He was a member of the pioneering Indigenous rock group the Warumpi Band. In 2000 he penned the unofficial anthem of the Sydney Olympics, My Island Home. Tonight Neil talks to Billy Pinnell about his life and work, and plays some of the songs he has written over the years. This session will include the launch of Native Born, a book of his lyrics.

THE COMMUNITY ROOM

10am The Italian Job

Globetrotting journalist Stephan Faris is based in Italy while Simon Capp, author of Italy? It Seemed Like A Good Idea at the Time, took his family there for an international sea change. Today they compare notes on Italian culture, lifestyle and its notorious bureaucracy. Chaired by Danielle White.

12 noon A Conversation with Peter Goldsworthy

Peter Goldsworthy moves between novels, short fiction, poetry, plays and opera with great ease and similar success. With his latest book Everything I Knew described as 'one of the best of the year' he talks to Clare Forster.

2pm Petty Politics

An Academy Award winner for animation, critically acclaimed cartoonist and inspired social

commentator, Bruce Petty is best known as one of Australia's most influential political cartoonists. Petty has been an eye-witness to the politics, turmoil and change of the 20th century, much of which he has documented in his cartoons. Today he talks to Russ Radcliffe about his work.

4pm Popular Science

It would seem science has never been so popular; discussing keeping science in the public eye and communicating it to a non specialist audience will be Idan Ben-Barak, Robert Bakker and Peter Gluckman. Chaired by Meredith Nash.

THE REFECTORY

10am A Conversation with Jenny Patrick

Clare Forster talks to best selling new Zealand novelist and literary phenomenon, Jenny Patrick, whose first novel, The Denniston Rose, has never left the New Zealand bestseller lists since it was published in 2003.

12 noon Climate Change: the Australian Experience with Stephen Williams

Associate Professor Stephen Williams is the director of a newly established research centre at James Cook University, the Centre for Tropical Biodiversity and Climate Change; today he talks about the Australian experience of climate change. Chaired by Deb Anderson.

A Darwin/Evolution Event

2pm Book Launch: Boy He Cry: An Island Odyssey by Roger Averill

Peter Mares will launch Roger Averill's remarkable account of a year on a remote Melanesian Island, Boy He Cry: An Island Odyssey (Transit Lounge)

Free event/refreshments provided.

4pm Short Stories

It is almost as hard to get short stories published as it is to write them! Discussing this oft

BOOKINGS

Tickets are on sale from Monday, January 19, 2009
and are available:

- * in person at The CUB Malthouse Box Office, 113 Sturt Street, Southbank
- * online - www.malthousetheatre.com.au
- * by phone - (03) 9685 5111
- * by fax - (03) 9685 5112 (please note there is a faxable booking form for patrons' convenience available for download at www.writersattheconvent.com)
- * by mail using the booking form referred to above to: Malthouse Ticketing Service, The C.U.B. Malthouse, 113 Sturt Street, Southbank VIC 3006

Ticket prices are:

Single ticket (full price)	\$17
Single ticket (concession)	\$15
Batch of 5 tickets (full price)	\$80
Batch of 5 tickets (concession)	\$70
Batch of 10 tickets (full price)	\$155
Batch of 10 tickets (concession)	\$135

These prices include all booking fees as well as a fifty cents carbon offset levy. A 'batch' of tickets can be either a number of tickets to one event or single tickets to a number of events - it is simply a discount for quantity.

Patrons are encouraged to book early to avoid disappointment as tickets are strictly limited.

Children under 10 admitted free.

All tickets are offered subject to availability. All bookings are final and no refunds or exchanges will be given.

All prices include GST.

maligned form will be one of its masters Robert Drewe and Claire Thomas who published several short stories before the publication of her stunning debut novel Fugitive Blue. Chaired by Beth Driscoll.

THE BISHOP'S PARLOUR

12 noon Remarkable Beginnings #2

This year's second batch of impressive debut authors will feature Claire Thomas, Jacinta Halloran and Lia Hills, all of whom are enjoying great critical acclaim for their first books. Chaired by Jude Bourguignon.

2pm Marisa Raoul's French 'Folie'

Ma Folie Française details Marisa's Raoul's time in France, a place she describes as 'a place far, far away. A land where "les folies", were a regular and standard occurrence.' Today she talks to Danielle White.

4pm Getting Our Stories Straight

Discussing the importance of a strong narrative as the basis for well written fiction will be Robert Gott, Anthony O'Neill and Jacinta Halloran. Chaired by Nadine Davidoff.

PARTICIPANTS

Festival participants in brief

Louise Adler heads up leading academic publisher with a commercial edge, MUP.

Deb Anderson is a journalist and researcher at Melbourne University currently working on a book about drought.

Roger Averill will be launching his account of a year spent on a small Melanesian island - *Boy He Cry* - at this year's Writers at the Convent.

Dr Robert T. Bakker is one of palaeontology's greatest and most well known characters. He was the first man to hypothesize that dinosaurs may have been warm-blooded and was the scientist who believed that diseases caused the demise of the terrible lizards.

Idan Ben-Barak has used drama, humour, wit and even irony to bring the world of microbes alive in *Small Wonders*.

Helen Bodycomb is an award-winning visual artist specializing in mosaic work.

Coming originally from the book trade, **Jude Bourguignon** is a freelance marketing expert and a regular presenter at literary festivals.

Peter Bragge is a researcher at Melbourne University currently working on a book about musicians' injuries.

Writer/translator **Simon Capp** attempted an international sea change and wrote about his experiences in Italy? *It Seemed Like a Good idea at the Time*.

Steven Carroll won last year's Miles Franklin prize with his latest book, *The Time We Have Taken*.

Creative Programming Director of Writers at the Convent, **Simon Clews**, runs the University of Melbourne's Writing Centre and is Executive Producer for a TV series based on the John Marsden short story *The Dreamer*.

Steven Conté won the Best Fiction category of the inaugural Prime Minister's Literary Awards with *The Zookeeper's War*.

Rob Drewe is one of Australia's most acclaimed writers; his latest book, *The Rip*, takes him back to the short story form in which he demonstrated great mastery very early on in his career.

Beth Driscoll is a researcher at



SHANE MALONEY



PETER SINGER



ROGER AVERILL



NEIL MURRAY



MARISA RAOUL

Melbourne University and regularly writes in the media on literary matters.

Stephan Faris is an international foreign correspondent now based in Italy; his latest book *Forecast* looks at climate change.

Former publisher **Clare Forster** is now the Melbourne face of leading Australian literary agents, Curtis Brown.

Alice Garner is Melbourne performer, musician and writer/historian.

Professor Peter Gluckman is the Director of the Liggins Institute for Medical Research and the National Research Centre for Growth and Development, University of Auckland.

Peter Goldsworthy moves between novels, short fiction, poetry, plays and opera with great ease and huge success. His latest book is *Everything I Knew*.

Robert Gott is both the author of a series of Australian crime novels and the creator of *The Naked Man* cartoons in *The Age's* EG each Friday.

Jacinta Halloran is a GP and author who received great critical acclaim for her debut novel *Dissection* last year.

Writer, journalist and publicist to the stars, **Shirley Hardy-Rix**, once rode around the world on a motorcycle.

Sonya Hartnett is the internationally acclaimed author of novels for both adults and younger readers. Her work always enjoys great critical success and last year the Swedish Arts Council awarded Hartnett the 2008 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, the world's biggest prize for children's and youth literature.

Lia Hills will debut this year with her astonishing first novel *A Beginner's Guide to Living*.

Writer, performer, comedian and

newspaper columnist **Danny Katz** also masquerades as *The Modern Guru* dispensing invaluable (and sometimes valuable) advice to the confused, the love lorn, the curious and even the completely out of touch.

Melbourne University researcher **Jennifer Kloester** is the author of Georgette Heyer's *Regency World* and is currently working on a biography of Heyer.

Cartoonist, writer, cultural institution and national living treasure **Michael Leunig's** latest book is *The Lot: In Words*.

Young adult fiction expert **Pam Macintyre** lectures at Melbourne University and edits *Viewpoint* magazine.

Maggie Maguire is the CEO of the Abbotsford Convent Foundation and has been at the forefront of its rebirth as one of Melbourne's cultural icons.

Shane Maloney is the author of the best selling and much admired *Murray Whelan* crime series.

Peter Mares is a journalist and broadcaster with ABC Radio.

Professor Jonathan Marks of the Department of Anthropology, University of North Carolina at Charlotte is one of the world's leading anthropologists.

Dr Geoffrey Miller of the Psychology Department, University of New Mexico is an evolutionary psychologist best known for his research on sexual selection.

After more than two decades of writing, recording and performing, **Neil Murray** is one of Australia's most respected songwriters. He was a member of the pioneering indigenous rock group the *Warumpi Band*. In 2000 he penned the unofficial anthem of the Sydney Olympics, *My Island Home*.

Meredith Nash is a researcher at Melbourne University and a regular contributor to the international

media on issues surrounding pregnancy and motherhood.

Charmaine O'Brien has documented the history of Melbourne's developing food culture over the years in *Flavours of Melbourne*.

Anthony O'Neill combines historical research with great storytelling in his highly successful novels.

Jenny Patrick is a writer and jeweller who lives in Wellington, New Zealand. The *Denniston Rose*, which was her first novel, has never left the New Zealand best-seller lists since it was published in 2003, and has been voted one of the top 100 books in the world by *Whitcoulls* readers.

Bruce Petty is an Academy Award-winning and critically acclaimed cartoonist and social commentator.

Music aficionado **Billy Pinnell** regularly writes, reviews and broadcasts on the subject.

Rachel Power has collected the words of artists and mothers on the challenges facing them when balancing these two worlds in *The Divided Heart*.

Russ Radcliffe is an editor, publisher, literary mentor, events organizer and presenter and this year established *High Horse Publishing*.

Marisa Raoul has delighted the world with her account of her time in France - *Ma Folie Française*.

Peter Rodgers is a former

Australian ambassador to Israel and regular commentator on Middle Eastern affairs in the media.

Professor Michael Ruse is Lucyle T. Werkmeister Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Program in History and Philosophy of Science, Florida State University.

Internationally renowned philosopher, ethicist and author, **Peter Singer's** latest book, *The Life You Can Save* addresses the issue of world poverty.

David Smiedt has his tongue firmly in his cheek when documenting his search for his roots in *From Russia With Lunch: A Lithuanian Odyssey*.

Jane Sullivan is an author, literary mentor and highly accomplished journalist who writes regularly for the books pages of *The Age*.

Short story writer and Melbourne University researcher, **Claire Thomas'** first book, *Fugitive Blue*, was deemed 'a novel to be reckoned with' when it was published last year.

Professor Malcolm Walter is Director of the Australian Centre for Astrobiology at the University of New South Wales.

Australian film-maker **Sarah Watt** received an AFI award for best director for *Look Both Ways*.

Danielle White is a researcher at Melbourne University with a book on sex and mirrors due to come out with MUP in the near future.

Scottish-born but Australian resident **Alison Whitelock** has delighted the world with a raucous romp about her dysfunctional family in her first book *Poking Seaweed with a Stick and Running Away from the Smell*.

Associate Professor Stephen Williams is the director of a newly established research centre at James Cook University, the Centre for Tropical Biodiversity and Climate Change.

In 2009 Writers at the Convent will join with a whole host of other organizations around the country to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *The Origin of Species*, which sparked an intellectual, social and spiritual revolution.
More information: <http://www.evolutionaustralia.org.au/>

