



## PRESS RELEASE

**EMBARGO:** the following press release is embargoed until Thursday, February 7, 2013 at 10:00 PM – eastern.

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### NATIONAL WRITERS SERIES ANNOUNCES 2013 WINTER/SPRING LINE-UP

*International Bestsellers, New York Times Bestsellers, National Book Award Winners, Pulitzer Prize Winners, And Golden Globe & Emmy Award Winning Writers Headline New Season.*

*Literature, Crime, Well-Being, International Affairs, Sports, Fatherhood, And The Best-Written Show On Television Are Part Of Year-Long Book Festival.*

*Gillian Flynn, Nathaniel Philbrick, Temple Grandin, Buzz Bissinger, and Colum McCann among authors scheduled to appear; special guest hosts to include NWS co-founder and bestselling author Doug Stanton, Newsweek/The Daily Beast books editor Lucas Wittmann, and Bibliostar.tv creator Rich Fahle.*

Traverse City, Mich. – January 28, 2013

Called one of America's "premier literary events," (Poets & Writers magazine), a "national treasure" by Harvard professor and philosopher Michael Sandel, and hailed by authors and publishers across the country as a must-see evening of conversation with today's best storytellers, the National Writers Series will launch its 2013 Winter/Spring season on **February 7** with **Chip Johannessen**, executive producer and a writer of Showtime's award-winning television show *Homeland*. Johannessen will be in conversation onstage with NWS co-founder and New York Times bestselling author of *In Harm's Way* and *Horse Soldiers* Doug Stanton.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** At this event, NWS will also unveil the event line-up for the remainder of the Winter/Spring 2013 season. The line-up includes some of the country's most celebrated

authors, journalists and storytellers. Tickets for these remaining evenings will go on sale immediately following the event, at 9 PM.

Critics everywhere have hailed *Homeland* as the best thing on television, period. Don't miss this rare chance to meet and talk with Chip Johannessen, one of television's most creative and successful writers and producers. The series was recently nominated for four 2013 Golden Globes, including Best Supporting Actor for Mandy Patinkin, Best Actor for Damian Lewis (won), Best Actress for Claire Danes (won), and Best Television Series – Drama (won). *Homeland* made television history when it did something no other show has done in 25 years: it won four out of five of the major drama awards at the Emmys – Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Writing, and Best Series. This evening at NWS is a combination front row seat and backstage pass to what has been called the most addictive and engrossing show on TV.

On Tuesday, March 5, the conversation continues with Pulitzer Prize-winning author **Buzz Bissinger**. Bissinger is the author of several highly acclaimed nonfiction books, including *Friday Night Lights*, *A Prayer for the City*, *Three Nights in August*, and *Shooting Stars*. His most recent book, *Father's Day*, is a remarkable and honest memoir about a cross-country trip he took with his 24-year old son whom Bissinger describes as a savant-- challenged by serious intellectual deficits but also blessed with rare talents: an astonishing memory, a dazzling knack for navigation, and a reflexive honesty which can make him both socially awkward and surprisingly wise. Bissinger hoped that the trip would bring them closer together, and reveal to him the mysterious workings of his son's mind and heart. This is sure to be an evening that reveals, as Susan Orlean declared of *Father's Day*, a “fabric of love and pride and heartbreak and salvation that makes a family, with an honesty that will make you gasp.”

A reporter for some of the nation's most prestigious newspapers, Bissinger has published work in *Vanity Fair*, *The New York Times Magazine* and *Sports Illustrated* and was a co-producer and writer for the ABC television drama *NYPD Blue*. His book *Friday Night Lights* was made into a critically acclaimed film and popular television series.

Bissinger will be joined on stage by special guest host **Neal Rubin**. Rubin is a columnist for the *Detroit News* and currently writes the nationally syndicated comic strip *Gil Thorp*. He previously worked for the Detroit Free Press, Las Vegas Review-Journal, Las Vegas Sun and Greeley Tribune. He was three times voted Nevada Sportswriter of the Year by the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association.

**Blaine Harden**, foreign correspondent for *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, and contributor to PBS *Frontline* and *The Economist*, makes his appearance on the NWS stage **Tuesday, April 9**. Harden has made a career reporting from some of the world's most dangerous places. But few compare to the political prisons in North Korea and the inhuman conditions Harden exposed in his latest bestseller, *Escape from Camp 14*. This evening will offer an unforgettable conversation about one man's journey to freedom, and a celebration of the human spirit.

*Escape from Camp 14*, an international bestseller and recently featured on *60 Minutes*, tells the true story of Shin Dong-hyuk. Born into a life of hard labor behind the electrified fences of the Kaechon internment camp, Shin is the only person to have escaped from what can only be described as a modern-day gulag. *Escape from Camp 14* has been translated into 22

languages and was named a “Best Book of 2012” by *Christian Science Monitor*, *Financial Times*, *South China Morning Post*, *Slate*, *School Library Journal* and *Huffington Post Canada*.

Blaine Harden will be joined on stage by **Lucas Wittmann**. Wittmann is the Literary Editor and Senior Articles Editor at Newsweek and The Daily Beast. He oversees the National Magazine Award-winning Book Beast, a leading online book section. Prior to the Beast, he worked in publishing at W.W. Norton & Company.

The NWS season continues on **Thursday, April 25** when mega-selling novelist **Gillian Flynn** comes to the City Opera House stage, with special guest host **Doug Stanton**, NWS co-founder and New York Times bestselling author of *In Harm's Way* and *Horse Soldiers*. Flynn is the author of the 2012 enormous breakout bestseller ***Gone Girl***.

Having spent more than 30 weeks on the New York Times bestseller list, *Gone Girl* tells the can't-put-down story of a marriage, infidelity, and murder. With razor-sharp writing, wit, and trademark psychological insight, Gillian Flynn delivers a fast-paced, devilishly dark, and ingeniously-plotted thriller that critics have described as a masterpiece. Don't miss Gillian in this one-of-a-kind of evening where she dishes about writing, the success of her book, and what she's planning next.

On **Tuesday, May 14** renowned scholar, historian, and National Book Award winner **Nathaniel Philbrick** will be in conversation with special guest host **Rich Fahle**, founder of Astral Road Media and creator of Bibliostar.tv.

Philbrick's books *In the Heart of the Sea*, *Sea of Glory*, *Mayflower*, and *The Last Stand* have all received enormous critical acclaim. *In the Heart of the Sea* won the prestigious National Book Award and *Mayflower* was a finalist for the 2007 Pulitzer Prize in History. Philbrick also received critical acclaim for *The Last Stand*, his book about Sitting Bull and George Armstrong Custer. A *New York Times* “notable book,” *The Last Stand* was the basis for the 2-hour PBS American Experience film *Custer's Last Stand*. In his forthcoming book, ***Bunker Hill: A City, A Siege, A Revolution***, Philbrick brilliantly tackles the Boston battle that ignited the American Revolution. No one writes better about the American experience than Nathaniel Philbrick, and this evening onstage will be both enlightening and thought-provoking.

Looking for intrigue straight from the headlines? Former CIA officer **Jason Matthews** follows Philbrick on **Wednesday, May 22**. Matthews' debut thriller, ***Red Sparrow***, is a fast paced, up-to-the-minute espionage novel written by a man who lived the life of an intelligence officer for 33 years. Fans of Stieg Larsson, Daniel Silva, and John LeCarre will love *Red Sparrow*. In this beautifully-written literary thriller, the United States and Putin's Russia are still very much at deadly odds. Heroine Dominika Egorova is drafted against her will to become a “Sparrow,” a trained seductress in the Soviet intelligence service. Assigned to operate against Nathaniel Nash, a first-tour CIA officer, the two young intelligence officers collide in a charged atmosphere of trade-craft, deception, and carnal attraction. This smashing new novel promises to be one of America's favorite summer reads, and a book club favorite. Don't miss this chance to meet and hear Jason Matthews up-close and in-person.

**Doug Stanton** will appear on stage with Matthews as the evening's special guest host.

We're pleased to welcome National Book Award winner **Colum McCann** as our next guest on **Thursday, June 6**. Readers of *The New Yorker* magazine will remember McCann's fiction as mesmerizing and beautifully wrought. Born in Ireland and now living in New York City, McCann is the author of five critically acclaimed novels and two collections of short stories. His novel *Let the Great World Spin* centers around the glorious Twin Towers tightrope walk of Philippe Petit in 1974. The novel became a bestseller on four continents, won the 2009 National Book Award, and firmly established McCann as one of the most acclaimed literary writers publishing today, both in the U.S. and abroad. His newest novel, *Transatlantic*, uses the real life narratives of Frederick Douglass, British aviators, Alcock and Brown, and Senator George Mitchell, in a literary tour de force that spans a historical period of 150 years. Goodreads.com has called *Transatlantic* a "profound meditation on identity and history in a wide world that grows somehow smaller and more wondrous with each passing year."

McCann's fiction has been published in over 30 languages and has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Esquire*, *Paris Review*, *Granta*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *GQ*. This night at NWS will be a feast of words, ideas, and insights from a master storyteller. Don't miss this lively celebration of literature and the transformative power of the imagination.

McCann will be joined on stage by **Leigh Haber** books editor for *O, The Oprah Magazine*.

The Winter/Spring season concludes on **Monday, June 24** with internationally-renowned author, lecturer and activist **Temple Grandin**. Grandin's ground-breaking book *Emergence: Labeled Autistic* introduced her to the world as a fearless explorer just returned with news from an otherwise unknown land called autism. Her life story was depicted in HBO's 2010 movie *Temple Grandin*, starring Claire Danes in the role that won Danes an Emmy and a Golden Globe.

Grandin is as well known for her work in "well-being" as she is for her autism advocacy. She has earned critical acclaim for her books *Animals in Translation* and *Animals Make Us Human*, and is regarded as one of the nation's most respected advocates of animal welfare.

In her remarkable new book, *The Autistic Brain: Thinking Across the Spectrum*, Grandin shares remarkable new discoveries and introduces readers to innovative theories of what causes, how we diagnose, and how to best treat autism. As the most sought-after speaker in the autism community, Grandin is known for appearances that mix laughter with revelation, and audience members cannot help but be changed after an evening in her presence. Unafraid and, at times, intensely personal, Grandin delivers insights into the deepest uncharted regions of our shared experiences, both with each other and with the natural world.

Grandin will appear on stage with special guest host **Laura Hohnhold**. Hohnhold is an editor for Byliner.com. Byliner has been hailed as "One of the 10 Most Innovative Media

Companies in the World," and they are currently the leading publisher in the fastest-growing segment of digital books.

Tickets for all NWS events (excluding An Evening with Chip Johannessen, already on sale) go on sale to Friends of NWS immediately following the February 7 event with Johannessen. Friends memberships are available for purchase that evening. For more information about Friends memberships or to purchase a Friends membership in advance of the event visit <http://nationalwritersseries.org/join-nws/>. Tickets go on sale to the general public on February 11. All tickets can be purchased at the City Opera House box office, by phone at 231-941-8082 and online at [www.cityoperahouse.org](http://www.cityoperahouse.org).

Ticket prices are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door for all events. All events offer the choice of a seating-only ticket or a "Whatta Book Deal!" package. "Whatta Book Deal!" pricing varies by event and includes a ticket, a pre-signed copy of the author's book (discounted 35% or more off the retail price), and pre-event reception with the author (pending author availability).

All NWS events this season will feature live musical performances before the author appearances, during which time attendees can enjoy complimentary dessert from Morsels and a cash bar reception, as well as purchase books and NWS merchandise. The evenings will also include an audience Q&A and most events will include a post-event book signing.

The National Writers Series, founded in 2009, is a year-round book festival bringing award-winning authors, journalists and storytellers together with thousands of fans in downtown Traverse City. The National Writers Series was founded by New York Times bestselling author Doug Stanton, Traverse City attorney Grant Parsons and Traverse City Record Eagle reporter Anne Stanton.

Net proceeds from NWS events support the National Writers Series and its scholarship fund, which benefits college-bound writing and arts students attending Grand Traverse regional high schools. NWS, in partnership with Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS), also directs the Front Street Writers Program, a one-of-a-kind creative writing workshop for high school students. Proceeds from NWS events also support the Front Street Writers program.

The National Writers Series is a nonprofit organization that relies on community support for sustainability. By donating to NWS you support our mission to promote students' writing excellence and connect communities with national writers to advance appreciation of the written word. All contributions are 100% tax deductible. Donations can be made online at [www.nationalwritersseries.org](http://www.nationalwritersseries.org), by mail: NWS, 123 W. Front Street, Traverse City, MI 49684, or in person at any NWS event.

The National Writers Series is, in part, made possible by our sponsors, including our sustaining sponsors FIM Group and Cherry Capital Airport. Additional sponsors include: Traverse City Eye, Horizon Books, Wells Fargo Advisors, Leelanau Peninsula Vintners Association (LPVA), Amical, Friends of the Traverse Area District Library, Morsels, Copy Queenz, Cherry Capital Subaru, and the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation.

To become a sponsor or to gain additional information contact: Chuck O'Connor via at [chuck@emgconsult.com](mailto:chuck@emgconsult.com) or 231-590-2521.

For more information on the National Writers Series, visit [www.nationalwritersseries.org](http://www.nationalwritersseries.org), contact NWS executive director Jill Tewsley at [jtewsley@nwstc.org](mailto:jtewsley@nwstc.org), or call the National Writers Series at (231) 577-6971.

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