



PRESS RELEASE
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Hong Kong International Literary Festival Restructured to Meet Demand from Young Readers and Schools

Eoin Colfer Confirmed as Headliner for New Hong Kong International Young Readers Festival

HONG KONG – Hong Kong International Literary Festival (HKILF) today announced that international best-selling author of the *Artemis Fowl* series, Eoin Colfer, will headline a new festival for children to be launched in March 2012.

Founded in 2001, HKILF is known for hosting literary greats such as Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney, Booker Prize winners John Banville, Anne Enright, Kiran Desai, Alan Hollinghurst and Yann Martel, Pulitzer Prize winner Junot Díaz and UK Poet Laureate Andrew Motion. Other award and best-selling authors featured at the festival include Markus Zusak, Louis de Bernières and Amy Tan, and most recently Amitav Ghosh and Emma Donoghue.

Reflecting the Festival's increasing significance to the territory's schools, the Festival will launch the inaugural **Hong Kong International Young Readers Festival (YRF) in March next year**. To be held from 5 to 18 March, the new festival targets children up to 14 years, and will offer wider-ranging content and involve more schools.

Eoin Colfer, best known for the *Artemis Fowl* series, has been confirmed as the festival headliner for the new YRF.

Festival Co-Chairs Gabriela Kennedy and Christine Van explain the rationale of spinning off a new festival just for children. "Over the years, the Festival has served both adults and children. An integral part of the Festival has been the Schools Programme, which has grown in size and stature.

"Increasingly, the Festival has been encouraged to take on a more educational role, to instill a love of reading and to assist in raising fluency and competency in English among Hong Kong's young generation. We feel the time has come for a dedicated children's festival that will better meet the needs of our young friends."

Veteran Lynn Yau, Chief Executive of The Absolutely Fabulous Theatre Connection (AFTEC) has been named as Schools Programme Advisor to the new festival. In addition to her role in AFTEC, Yau also advises other organisations such as



Wideworld Graduate School of Education at Harvard University and Radio and Television Hong Kong.

In addition to author talks, the festival will feature workshops for teachers and students, including a mentorship programme that is currently being developed with visiting festival writers.

A new website is now available at www.youngreadersfestival.org.hk. With local schools in mind, the website is now available in Chinese as well. Visitors can post Facebook messages through the website.

With the new **Young Readers Festival** scheduled for March, the long running **Hong Kong International Literary Festival** will be moved permanently to October 2012. The Festival will be staged between 5 and 14 October targeting adults as well as young adults.

As an indication of the diversity and variety in the Festival programme, authors already committed to the 2012 festival include John Boyne, Harry Clifton and William Fiennes. They will be joined by a cohort of writers who will represent a cross-section of different genres in writing.

To mark the new changes and start the countdown to the main October festival, a series of events are being held this month. One of these is a sold-out event today with Thomas Friedman, bestselling author of *That Used To Be Us: What Went Wrong With America – And How It Can Come Back*.

Other events scheduled include:

Written In China: New Trends in Chinese Fiction

Thursday, 27 October, 7.30pm at the Culture Club

Speakers: Murong Xuecun, Chen Xiwo and Martin Merz with Harvey Thomlinson moderating.

How to Launch a Successful Book, Product or Service

Monday, 31 October, 12noon at the Kee Club

Speakers: Maseena Ziegler, author of bestselling *Ladies Who Launch in Hong Kong*, with a panel including Melissa Mowbray d'Arbela, Adrienne Ma, Esther Ma, Lizette Smook, Sonya Madden and Ivy Wong Stephens.

The Festival will be featuring more events in the lead up to the main festival when it opens on 5 October 2012.

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Notes to Editors

Hong Kong International Literary Festival was founded in 2001 and is organised annually. The Festival has attracted support and attention each year and is now receiving recognition and stature on the international literary stage.

The Festival receives support from companies, grants, consulates, community partners and small businesses. Individual donations and Friends of the Festival membership fees are also significant sources of income.

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