

Done and dusted!

Open Book 2011



FRANKIE MURREY

Festival Coordinator

It is hard to believe the 'first edition' of Open Book is a thing of the past and that plans are already underway for 2012 (nick-named the reprint...)

Responses to the festival have been overwhelmingly positive. The past year has been non-stop learning from our side, and there will be many changes to the festival next year. Some things, though, will stay the same. We will be inviting some of the most exciting authors from around the world and are confident that come September next year, Cape Town will once again be transformed into an international hub.

Looking back over the five days of the festival, there are so many moments that stand out that choosing between them becomes incredibly difficult. One of the highlights for us generally, though, has to be seeing how much both the participants and the audiences enjoyed the programme. We put an enormous amount of thought into all of the events and it was unbelievably rewarding to see that paying off.

I won't soon forget clusters of authors – local and international – chatting animatedly with each other. Nor will I forget the buzz

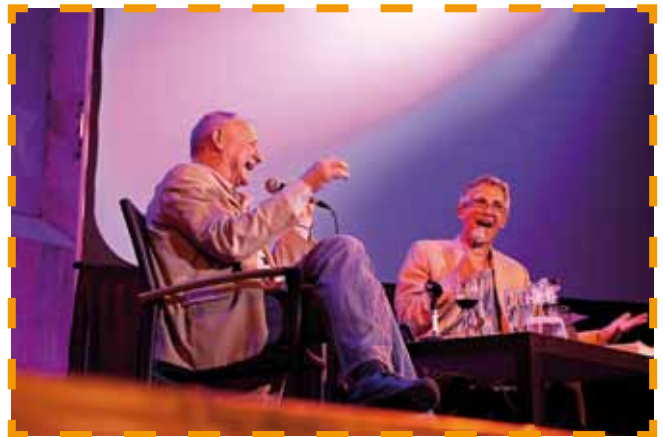


▲ Earl Lovelace signs copies of *Is just a movie*

in the foyer of the Fugard Theatre as audiences waited to go into an event or stuck around after the end. This is something we look forward to experiencing again in 2012.

All good things must end though – here are some of the many authors we were sad to say goodbye to towards the end of September...

Earl Lovelace (See page 8 in News) was involved in a number of events, all of which were incredibly well received. A master storyteller, he captivated audiences with his gentle Trinidadian accent while talking about his most recent novel, *Is just a movie*, and about his work in film during his readings.



▲ Patrick Gale and Michiel Heyns discuss *Lost ground*

Patrick Gale's easy manner and immense generosity during events has made him a favourite with Open Book staff, other authors and all who saw him in events. He and Michiel Heyns spoke about Heyns' latest novel, *Lost ground*, a book which Gale read earlier this year and thoroughly enjoyed. Listening to him chairing the Lives of Writers' discussion with Julie Myerson and Shehan Karunatilaka was another wonderful experience that will stick with me.



▲ John Grace digests some reads

John Grace was an utter delight, whether digesting reads for audiences or discussing his new book, *Vertigo*, about the trials and tribulations that define supporting Tottenham Hotspurs. His visit to Cape Town was cut short due to prior commitments, but the time he had here was well spent.



◀ Jane Bussmann in action during her show, *Bussman's holiday*

Jane Bussmann already had some fans when she arrived in Cape Town. After Open Book, that number has grown significantly. While she was involved in several events, it is without a doubt the two shows she put on that will stick in people's minds. Based on the experiences she wrote about in *The worst*

date ever, her shows had people clutching their sides with laughter. *Bussmann's holiday* is something I'm very happy not to have missed.

And then there were the locals ...

We were very excited to see the Writer Sports events – partly because they are very different to the other events we scheduled and partly because the authors involved were so well suited to them. In *Writer Sports 1: The Cringe Factor*, Shaïda Kazie Alie, Justin Fox, Sarah Lotz and Tom Eaton read the best worst opening page to a novel to a delighted audience. Imraan Coovadia chaired the event with style.



▲ *The Cringe factor* (ltr): Imraan Coovadia, Shaïda Kazie Alie, Justin Fox, Sarah Lotz and Tom Eaton



▲ Peter Harris and Jay Naidoo chat to Mervyn Sloman

We were delighted that acclaimed authors Peter Harris and Jay Naidoo were able to join us for the first Open Book and the event featuring them (*Jay and Peter and a glass of Scotch*) was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the festival.



▲ Valiant Swart, Verushka Louw, Toast Coetzer, Andries Bezuidenhout and Stef Bos presenting *Die poësie van lirieke*

Valiant Swart, Andries Bezuidenhout, Stef Bos and Toast Coetzer captivated audiences with their presentation, **Die poësie van lirieke**. Their talents as musicians were put aside for the evening as people focused instead on the poetry of their lyrics.



▲ Janet Suzman and Chris Mann entertained audiences at the Fugard Theatre

Chris Mann's show featured Janet Suzman and was incredibly well received by the audience at the Fugard Theatre. It made for a powerful ending to the Open Book programme.

Last but certainly not least, one of the most important highlights from our side was the response from everyone to the stocking of the library at Matthew Goniwe Memorial High School. Thanks to the support we received from publishers and festival goers, we were able to hand over a fully stocked and functional library to the principal on Saturday 24 September. Our involvement with the school library is ongoing, so the number of books on the shelves will continue to grow.

Over the past nine months, we have spoken to so many people about the three plans of the festival. It is wonderful to look at the five days of the festival and see how far we came in achieving those goals:

- ▶ to put on a truly international festival that attracts authors and audiences from around the world
- ▶ to do everything we can to build the profiles of young South African authors for an international audience
- ▶ to do everything we can to encourage a love of reading and books amongst the youth of Greater Cape Town.

We have made a strong start on all three commitments and will, over the course of the next year, build on that. Part of the process will be to continue conversations with other festivals around the world. The aim here is to set up exchange programmes that will see South African authors travelling to those festivals. The exciting thing about this is that we can now count on help from a number of

authors who have volunteered to put in (very enthusiastic) words on our behalf.

We will be posting all the news for the 2012 festival on our Facebook page as well as on our web site www.openbookfestival.co.za. If you haven't yet joined our mailing list, please be sure to do so to ensure you receive updates. For further details about Open Book 2011, please contact Frankie Murrey <frankie@openbookfestival.co.za>.

Open Book Cape Town is organised in partnership with SA PEN, the French Institute, Equal Education, the Gordon Institute of Performing and Creative Arts, the Townhouse Hotel, the Australian High Commission, the South African Association of Canadian Studies, the Cape Times, the Goethe Institute and African Centre for Cities, and sponsored by Leopard's Leap Wines, SAA UK, Random House Struik, Penguin Books, NB Publishers, Jonathan Ball Publishers, Book Promotions, Jacana Media, Macmillan SA, Oxford University Press, Pearson Education, Lapa Uitgewers, Wits University Press, the Fugard Theatre, Iziko Museums, the District 6 Museum, Cape Town Central Library, Lobby Books, the Book Lounge and Cape Town Tourism.

I am a writer who came
from a sheltered life.
A sheltered life can be
a daring life as well. For
all serious daring start
from within.

Eudora Welty
(One writers beginning, 1984)