



**UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL 00.01am MONDAY 11 MAY 2009**

### **Orange Prize Shadow Youth Panel Reveal Their Shortlist**

**London, 11th May 2009:** Orange today announces the shortlist selected by the youth panel recruited to shadow the judging process of the official Orange Prize for Fiction 2009. The panel forms part of a campaign to engage younger readers with the Orange Prize.

The youth panel members are Lily Dessau (16), Joe Kerridge (16), Clarissa Pabi (18), Rossana Duarte (18), Francis Gene-Rowe (18) and Max Elsworth (19).

Recruited via teenage website, Spinebreakers.co.uk, the shadow panel read the 20 books longlisted for the 2009 Orange Prize and then met to choose their shortlist of six. The meeting was facilitated by Kate Mosse, author and Honorary Director of the Orange Prize.

The panel have also been sharing their experiences of judging a book prize publicly on Spinebreakers since they began reading in March.

“The quality of the youth panel challenges the often negative news stories put out in the media about teenagers and reading,” commented Kate Mosse. “There was outstanding analysis, energy for the task in hand, commitment and an openness and determination to judge each book on its own merits - it was a privilege to eavesdrop on their deliberations.”

She continues, “If ever proof was needed that what matters is a passion for reading, not age or previous experience in this area, then this panel is it and we are very grateful to them all for giving up their time at such a busy point in the academic year.”

Strikingly, although many of the same novels which appear on the Orange Prize shortlist were popular with the teenage panel, no cross over appears between the lists selected by the youth panel and the official Orange Prize judging panel.

The shortlist chosen by the youth panel is:

***Girl in a Blue Dress*** by Gaynor Arnold, Tindal Street Press

***Blonde Roots*** by Bernardine Evaristo, Hamish Hamilton

***The Lost Dog*** by Michelle de Kretser, Chatto & Windus

***A Mercy*** by Toni Morrison, Chatto & Windus

***The Russian Dreambook of Colour and Flight*** by Gina Oscher, Portobello Books

***The Flying Troutmans*** by Miriam Toews, Faber and Faber

The panel in their own words:

**Max Elsworth, 19, on *Girl in a Blue Dress* by Gaynor Arnold:**

"*Girl in a Blue Dress* is fervidly written, enthralling and charming. The characters are endearingly witty, amiable and vivid; Arnold conveys this Victorian scenario perfectly."

**Clarissa Pabi, 18, on *Blonde Roots* by Bernardine Evaristo:**

"Evaristo addresses the holocaust of slavery in an extremely unique and exciting way. *Blonde Roots* is not an emulation of Malorie Blackman's *Noughts and Crosses*, it's more like Phillip Pullman meets *Roots*. His *Dark Materials* meets *Her Light Materials*. This book has the X-Factor!"

**Lily Dessau, 16, on *The Lost Dog* by Michelle de Kretser:**

"*The Lost Dog* is a poetically written and moving depiction of relationships between mothers and sons, friends and families, both painfully and beautifully true."

**Rossana Duarte, 18, on *A Mercy* by Toni Morrison:**

"*A Mercy* by Toni Morrison is an unfolding tapestry of five aptly ventriloquised voices, each threaded together unknowingly and embroidered onto a bedding of rich slave trade history and culture."

**Francis Gene-Rowe, 18, on *The Russian Dreambook of Colour and Flight* by Gina Oscher:**

"Tears and laughter are handled with equal adeptness and a certain crazy slavishness permeates the prose of this story that explores some profound themes. A thoroughly charming book that makes for a highly exciting and interesting read."

**Joe Kerridge, 16, on *The Flying Troutmans* by Miriam Toews:**

"*The Flying Troutmans* is a road trip of hope, guts and spirit. Its portrayal of the family is touchingly faithful and its intricacies are vivid and joyful. *The Flying Troutmans* is a wonderful book."

The panel will gather one more time later this month to decide their overall winner which will be revealed prior to the Orange Prize for Fiction 2009 awards ceremony in June.

The official Orange Prize judging panel, who announced their shortlist last month, includes broadcaster Fi Glover (Chair), writer and novelist Bidisha, journalist and academic Sarah Churchwell, journalist Kira Cochrane and entrepreneur Martha Lane Fox.

The Orange Prize for Fiction is the UK's only annual book award for international fiction written by a woman. Now in its fourteenth year, the Prize celebrates excellence, originality and accessibility in women's writing from throughout the world and is awarded for the best novel of the year written by a woman.

The 2009 winner will be presented with a cheque for £30,000 and a limited edition bronze statue known as 'the Bessie' at an awards ceremony in The Ballroom of the Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, London, on 3 June 2009.

Previous winners include Rose Tremain for *The Road Home* (2008), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie for *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2007), Zadie Smith for *On Beauty* (2006), Lionel Shriver for *We Need to Talk About Kevin* (2005) and Andrea Levy for *Small Island* (2004).

For more information, go to [www.orangeprize.co.uk](http://www.orangeprize.co.uk).

**ENDS**

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## **Notes to Editors**

Orange Prize for Fiction 2009 dates for the diary:

- Orange Award for New Writers and Anne Michaels event at Southbank Centre: 1 June
- Orange Prize Shortlist Readings at Southbank Centre: 2 June
- Orange Prize for Fiction awards ceremony in The Ballroom of the Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre: 3 June

### **The official Orange Prize for Fiction 2009 shortlist is:**

*Scottsboro* by Ellen Feldman, Picador

*The Wilderness* by Samantha Harvey, Jonathan Cape

*The Invention of Everything Else* by Samantha Hunt, HarvillSecker

*Molly Fox's Birthday* by Deirdre Madden, Faber and Faber

*Home* by Marilynne Robinson, Virago

*Burnt Shadows* by Kamila Shamsie, Bloomsbury

## **About the Youth Panel**

The youth panel were recruited via the Spinebreakers website, the UK's only online book community for teenagers run by teenagers.

### **Lily Dessau, 16**

Lily lives in South London and is studying Art, English, History and Maths at school. She loves reading and is also a fan of live music. Lily would like to study English Literature at University and her ambition is to become a writer or journalist. Her favourite authors include Philip Pullman, George Orwell and Malorie Blackman and she also enjoys reading murder/mystery, comedy and adventure stories.

### **Joe Kerridge, 16**

Joe goes to school in South East London. He has loved reading since a child and cites literature and sport, particularly cricket, as his two main passions. His top five authors at the moment include Ian McEwan, Jack Kerouac, Harold Pinter, Franz Kafka and Stephen Fry.

### **Rossana Duarte, 18**

Rossana is taking Physics, Chemistry and Biology A-levels and she hopes to go to university to study Chemistry. Her hobbies include go-karting, reading and writing poetry and astronomy and her dream is to become an astronaut. Rossana's favourite authors include Jane Austen, Stephen Fry, Isabel Allende and F.Scott Fitzgerald.

### **Clarissa Pabi, 18**

Clarissa is currently studying for A-levels in English Literature, Philosophy and Maths and also enjoys theatre, physics and politics. She writes for the Spinebreakers website and last year became the 2008 Roundhouse Theatre Poetry Champion. She is also part of the Barbican Young Poets. Her ambition is to become a critic and a writer and her favourite authors include Will Self, J.K Rowling and Mary Shelley.

### **Francis Rowe-Gene, 18**

Francis is a gap year student and next year he will be going to UCL to read English. In the meantime he works as a part-time teacher and tutor. His main interests are theatre, music, film and writing and he hopes one day to work in one or more of those fields. In the past he has worked on several theatre projects both in school and out, and when he is not teaching, he can normally be found with his nose in a book.

**Max Elsworth, 19**

Max is currently finishing English and History A-levels at college and his ambition is to study English at Oxford. His main hobbies include reading, writing, playing the cello and guitar. An aspiring story writer, poet, song writer and journalist, Max's top five authors are Tolkien, Edgar Allen Poe, Shakespeare, R.L Stine and J.K. Rowling.

**About Spinebreakers**

Spinebreakers.co.uk is a teen online book community run by teenagers themselves.

Launched in 2007, editorial control of the site is in the hands of a core editorial team of nine teenagers aged between 13 and 18 years, supported by a large network of contributing teen editors from across the UK.

The teen team produce a wide variety of multi-media content for the website including video and audio reviews, alternative book jackets and endings, soundtracks, author interviews, podcasts, blogs, short stories and much more.

**About Orange**

Orange is the key brand of the France Telecom Group, one of the world's leading telecommunications operators. With 123 million customers, the Orange brand now covers Internet, television and mobile services in the majority of countries where the Group operates.

At the end of 2008, France Telecom had consolidated sales of 53.5 billion euros (12.7 billion euros for the first quarter of 2009) and at 29 April 2009, the Group had a customer base of almost 184 million customers in 30 countries. These include 123 million mobile customers worldwide and 13 million broadband Internet (ADSL) customers in Europe. Orange is the number three mobile operator and the number one provider of broadband Internet services in Europe and, under the brand Orange Business Services, is one of the world leaders in providing telecommunication services to multinational companies.

In the UK, Orange provides high quality GSM coverage to 99% of the UK population. At the end of March 2009, Orange had almost 17 million customers in the UK – 15.8 million active mobile customers and close to one million fixed broadband customers.

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