



Prologue

In Stuart Dybeck's short story, "Blight," Deejo believes that the world is made up of infinitesimal voices, and Deejo equated voices with souls. If one listened, it was possible to hear...voices speaking a language of terror and beauty." This year, "World Voice," Old Dominion University's 18th annual literary festival, invites us to this world's many voices, to discern between the noise and the voices in the universal traffic jam, to see from another's perspective, and to celebrate.

Sitting in Chandler Hall, or the River Rooms, or the Atrium Garden at Webb Center, you will hear the pitch of voice from writer to writer will change. And hopefully you'll begin to notice that differences between artists are greater than word choice, rhythms and subject matter. While everyone would like to believe, we are all the same, one world, as Bob Marley sang, we are in fact, different. "World Voice" gives us the opportunity to hear individual voices, stories, and histories and to honor them. It is not an attempt to make one voice out of so many, but to recognize that we are from different perspectives, that we speak in many languages, and best of all, that we are not the same. What we have to say differs from culture to culture and writer to writer, evolves as we journey and explore as both audience and writer.

This week, you will travel with the voices. You will visit other worlds: Ireland, Singapore, Kashmir, the Philippine Islands, the Americas and Chile. You will pass through Africa and Greece and France en route to these other lands.

As always, the focus of the festival will remain on stories, verse and creative nonfiction. In addition to our gathering of international writers, other departments at Old Dominion University -- Multicultural Student Services, Music, Dance, International Studies, Foreign Language, Women Studies and others -- join the celebration of word and culture through their participation in evening invocations and international student readings. This year, we have extended a special invitation to Hampton Roads community organizations to partake in our international literary extravaganza. Their cultural booths, receptions and performances welcome students, community and writers alike to "World Voice." As always, each festival day ends with an evening reception in honor of our writers and their works. This year, the old AWP house on 49th Street, now the AWP and Old Dominion University International Writers Center, opens its doors, extending hospitality to writers and audience members. Please take advantage of these evening receptions. At day's end, they give us an opportunity to absorb all we've heard; a place and space to talk and respond to one another; and a chance to meet with writers one on one.

Norfolk's Chrysler Museum, along with Old Dominion University's Creative Writing Program, will co-sponsor the festival finale with a celebration and benefit reading by internationally acclaimed writer, Ariel Dorfman on Thursday, October 5th. While Dorfman writes fiction, poetry, and non fiction about Chile's political struggle, his plays and films are what bring him to international prominence. His play, *Death and the Maiden*, originally performed in London, and then on Broadway, has recently been made into a film by director Roman Polanski. His works have been translated into 27 languages. He is best known for his dynamic voice as a writer in exile. Dorfman describes his writing as a way of giving voice "to those who have disappeared and those who are left behind...Words become a way of returning to your country—a cemetery—, but also a resurrection ground." Chrysler Museum education director Anne Vernon welcomes Mr. Dorfman and other "World Voice" participants to Chrysler Museum's Theater and Huber Court in this final night, this festival of word and culture.

The doors at Chrysler Museum will open at 7:00 and will begin with gallery tours and an invocation by the United Ilocano Youth Dance Troupe of Hampton Roads. Immediately following Mr. Dorfman's reading, a reception in Huber Court completes our three day journey in search of "World Voice."

As this year's literary festival director, I might attempt to showcase our international writers and tell you what you will hear in our three day celebration of language, histories, and culture, but as I see it, that would be a disservice to you and to our distinguished guests. For as often as you've heard that we are all part of humanity and desire world peace, etcetera, etcetera, we are certainly not the same. I cannot know where the voices, our guides, will take us. We do not always see things in the same way. We do not always see. I cannot predict what you will hear in the course of our literary celebration, only that you will have the opportunity to listen, to journey, to explore. You must come and join us. You must sit in our halls and auditoriums. You must hear for yourself voices speaking in language of both terror and beauty so that you—so that we—might hear a voice different than our own and learn a thing or two about our collective soul.

~ M. Evelina Galang, Literary Festival Director