



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STUART ROSS TAKES TOP PRIZE AT POETRY NOW

TORONTO, March 30, 2017 --- **Stuart Ross** has been named the winner of the 9th Annual Battle of the Bards. Last night, the International Festival of Authors (IFOA), in partnership with *NOW Magazine*, welcomed 20 emerging and established poets to the stage. A jury composed of IFOA's Director, Geoffrey E. Taylor, Juno award winning recording artist and dub poet, Lillian Allen, and 2016 Poetry NOW winner, Chris Chambers, selected Ross following his captivating performance. As the winner, he receives **an invitation to read at the 38th edition of the International Festival of Authors (October 19-29, 2017) and an ad for his book in NOW Magazine.**

Stuart Ross is a writer, editor, writing teacher and small press activist living in Cobourg, Ontario. He is the prize-winning author of 20 books of poetry, fiction and essays, most recently the poetry collection *A Sparrow Came Down Resplendent*. His novel in prose poems, *Pockets*, is due out from ECW Press this fall. Stuart has taught writing workshops across the country, and was the 2010 Writer-in-Residence at Queen's University. He is currently working on about a dozen different poetry, non-fiction and fiction manuscripts.

IFOA will be celebrating Ontario's 150th birthday at the Festival this year by showcasing the literary talent of the province. This gives IFOA the opportunity to invite eight additional Poetry NOW contestants to read at the Festival and participate in various events: **Ronna Bloom, Amanda Earl, David B. Goldstein, Julie Cameron Gray, Jennifer LoveGrove, John Nyman, Nicholas Power and Dane Swan.**

In February, IFOA and *NOW Magazine* invited submissions from poets with collections published within the past five years and currently in print with a trade publisher. IFOA selected 20 readers via a random draw of all eligible submissions following the deadline for submissions on February 24. Those poets selected read last night in Harbourfront Centre's Brigantine Room.

IFOA Weekly events continue through till the end of June 2017. For more information and to purchase tickets, the public may visit ifoa.org or call the **Harbourfront Centre Box Office at 416-973-4000.**

Since its inception in 1974, the **International Festival of Authors** has hosted over 9,000 authors from more than 100 countries, including 22 Nobel Laureates. Our season runs from September to June and includes the annual International Festival of Authors (October 19-29, 2017), including IFOA Ontario, the annual ALOUD: a Celebration for Young Readers with Forest of Reading® Festival of Trees™ (May 16-18, 2017) and Toronto Lit Up (year-round).

Toronto's independent weekly, **NOW Magazine** was launched in 1981 as the city's alternative voice. Since then, it has become the largest alternative news and entertainment weekly in North America, and is considered one of Toronto's most influential taste-making publications both in print weekly and online every day of the week. *NOW Magazine* is available free every Thursday at all 65 Gateway newsstand locations throughout the TTC, at over 3,310 racks, boxes and newsstands across the GTA and daily on nowtoronto.com, mobile and iPad.

MEDIA CONTACT

Eirini Moschaki

Email: emoschaki@ifoa.org

Tel: 416-973-5836

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