



## News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **MASTER STORYTELLER ANN PATCHETT OPENS WINTER WORDS XV ON FEBRUARY 7 Revered Novelist and Indie Bookstore Savior to Give Encore Aspen Performance**

January 19, 2012, Aspen, CO – **The Aspen Writers' Foundation (AWF) will unveil its 2012 Winter Words season on February 7 with the much-anticipated return of Aspen favorite Ann Patchett, author of the bestselling novels *State of Wonder* and *Bel Canto*.** The award-winning writer will be the first artist to take the stage in the AWF's 15<sup>th</sup> annual literary performance series that also features **Tracy Kidder, Kathryn Stockett, Michael Chabon, and Geraldine Brooks** in the nine-author season lineup. Ann Patchett's Winter Words reading, talk, and book signing will be held at the Wheeler Opera House at 5:30 pm (doors at 5 pm), followed by an *Aspen Peak* Author Salon for AWF members at The Baldwin Gallery. Individual tickets, season passes, and Author Salon packages, starting at \$20, are available from Aspen Show Tickets at [www.aspenshowtix.com](http://www.aspenshowtix.com) and 970.920.5770. Winter Words now continues through April 9 to accommodate a **change of date for the Chabon event\* (previously scheduled for February 21).**

"Ann's imagination, charisma, and eloquence make for a powerful combination," said Lisa Consiglio, executive director of the Aspen Writers' Foundation, "and we are delighted to welcome one of our community's favorites back to Aspen."

#### **Author Bio**

Patchett became a household name among readers in 2001 with the debut of her breakout novel *Bel Canto*, which earned the National Book Critics Circle Award, among many other honors. Centered around a South American terrorist plot gone wrong, it is an implausible but wholly believable love story involving an American opera diva, a Japanese industrialist, a French ambassador, and a gang of guerrilla leftists. The book defined her as "a master storyteller [with] an entertaining habit of dropping ordinary people into extraordinary and exotic circumstances to see what they're made of" (*Publishers Weekly*).

She delivers on that distinctive literary promise, which author Fernanda Eberstadt characterized as "hell turned unlikely paradise," with her latest novel, *State of Wonder*. Soaring to #3 on the *New York Times*' hardcover fiction bestseller list when it debuted

last summer, *State of Wonder* is a provocative tale of morality and miracles, science and sacrifice set in the Amazon basin. *The New York Times Sunday Book Review* praised the “marriage of the magical and the prosaic, of poison-tipped arrows and Fourth of July barbeques, [that] informs every line of her prose.”

When describing the novel’s reluctant heroine, Marina Singh, a dutiful if unadventurous medical researcher who is sent deep into the rainforest to investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of her lab partner, Patchett explained in a 2011 NPR interview: "She finds out so much about herself as she loses her luggage and her cell phone and her contacts with civilization and ultimately her clothes. She really finds her own strength. She's telling us, 'If you are thrown off a cliff and into an ocean, you're gonna figure out how to swim'."

Patchett’s own resourcefulness came to light at the end of 2010 when Nashville was losing its bookstores one by one, a tale playing out in communities across the nation. Facing the gloomy prospect of life in a bookstore-less city, she decided to buck the trend — not to mention her own instincts — to open a 2,500-square foot literary outpost of her own. Of her decision to partner on the start-up last summer, she told *The New York Times*: “I have no interest in retail; I have no interest in opening a bookstore. But I also have no interest in living in a city without a bookstore.”

Now Patchett’s eight books, as well as those written by fellow authors she loves and respects, have found a home in the newly opened Parnassus Books, which she named after the mountain in Greece where literature, music, and poetry were born. In addition to her acclaimed previous novels, *Taft*, *Run*, *The Magician’s Assistant*, and *The Patron Saint of Liars*, Patchett is also the author of two works of nonfiction: *The New York Times* bestselling *Truth & Beauty* and *What now?*

### **The Details**

Winter Words events take place at 5:30 pm (doors at 5 pm). Tickets are \$20/event or \$110/season subscription, with deeper discounts available for AWF members, Aspen Institute Society of Fellows (SOF), students, and educators. Visit [aspenwriters.org](http://aspenwriters.org) for more details on Winter Words events. The remainder of the Winter Words 2012 schedule is: **Geraldine Brooks** and **Tony Horwitz** (Feb 27); **Tracy Kidder** (Mar 1); **Daniyal Mueenuddin** (Mar 8); **Jonathan Wells** (Mar 19); **Kathryn Stockett** (Apr 3); and **Michael Chabon**, interviewed by **Andrew Sean Greer**, on the **newly rescheduled date of April 9**.

*\*Michael Chabon’s event date, previously scheduled for February 21, has been moved to April 9.*

### **Author Salons**

Those literary fans who want to get “up close and behind the ropes” at Winter Words, may alternately purchase tickets or passes to the AWF’s Author Salon series. Immediately following the public talk by each author, a private fête with the guest of honor will be held at a downtown art gallery. This is a rare opportunity to break bread and share conversation with a renowned author, all while participating in a private viewing of the gallery’s art collection.

Each Author Salon package includes an event ticket with reserved seating at Winter Words 2012, plus a pass to the private after-party held in each author's honor, brought to you in part by *Aspen Peak* magazine. Tickets (\$50) and passes (\$250) are available from Aspen Show Tickets to members of the AWF and SOF. Memberships and more information are available from the Aspen Writers' Foundation at 970.925.3122, ext. 2# and [www.aspenwriters.org](http://www.aspenwriters.org).

**The Aspen Writers' Foundation** was founded in Aspen in 1976 as a cutting edge poetry conference and literary magazine. Today the Aspen Writers' Foundation is one of the nation's leading literary centers and a stage for the world's most prominent authors. AWF programs employ literature as a tool for provoking thought, broadening perspectives, fostering connections, inspiring creativity, and giving voice. Since 2009, the AWF has partnered with the Aspen Institute, underscoring the highest humanistic ideals of Aspen founder Walter Paepcke: to better understand human challenges by cultivating one's inner life through the exchange of words, stories, and ideas.

**The Aspen Institute** mission is twofold: to foster values-based leadership, encouraging individuals to reflect on the ideals and ideas that define a good society, and to provide a neutral and balanced venue for discussing and acting on critical issues. The Aspen Institute does this primarily in four ways: seminars, young-leader fellowships around the globe, policy programs, and public conferences and events. The Institute is based in Washington, DC; Aspen, Colorado; and on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It also has an international network of partners.

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