



The 2008 Melbourne Writers Festival has a strong connection with Russian culture- both contemporary and historical. We expect huge interest in these events and would appreciate it if you could pass on this information to anyone interested who would like to join us.

Some of the festival highlights include:

- A tribute poetry reading of much-loved Russian poet **Anna Akhmatova** in stately St Pauls Cathedral on Sunday 31 August. Historian **Orlando Figes, Robert Dessaix, Anya Ulinich, David Francis** and many others will read Akhmatova's poems (in both Russian and English). Also, on Friday, August 29 there will be an event looking at the life and work of Akhmatova.
- Historian **Orlando Figes** is a world authority on Stalin. His books include *Peasant Russia, Civil War: The Volga Countryside in Revolution, 1917-21*, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia* and *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia*. Russian scholar **Robert Dessaix** will interview **Figes**.
- Fascinating glimpses of a turbulent century can be experienced in *Memory Guide My Hand* on Sunday 31 August. This presentation combines storytelling, music and stunning photographic images. Actors **Pip Mushin** and **Elisa Gray** will read portions of six stories from *Memory Guide My Hand*, the second anthology of autobiographical writings by Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union. The readings will be accompanied by **Yuriy** and **Isabella Mougernan** on balalaika and keyboard and by screened images of photojournalist, **Emmanouil Droukman**. Presenter **Julie Meadows** is editor and creator of the Makor Library's Write Your Story project, now into its tenth year.
- Australian author **David Francis** who now lives in the US will be interviewed by Kath & Kim's **Jane Turner**. David and Jane trace their friendship back to the early eighties when they were both in Moscow, the setting for David's latest novel *Stray Dog Winter*. The book is pure Soviet noir, Graham Greene with a sexy twist, as a naive hero is thrust into nightmare and betrayal at the end of the Cold War, as well as being a literary novel of originality and linguistic power.
- Young Russian author **Anya Ulinich** is also a guest this year. Born in 1973 in Moscow, Ulinich and her family left Moscow when she was seventeen, and emigrated to the United States.. *Petropolis* her first novel – a satire and a love story – begins in Siberia and rollicks around the US.

Over 300 writers will appear at the 2008 Melbourne Writers Festival over 10 days – 22 – 31 August. Events are scheduled from 10:00AM until late in Federation Square and other city venues. The full program is available in *The Age* on Friday, July 18. Early bird discounts are available until August 2.

Please contact us for more information and we hope you and your friends join us.

Bookings

☎ 1300 7222 11

🌐 www.mwf.com.au

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