National Book Award Winner Mark Doty Reads for Midwest Poets Series

Kansas City area residents and beyond will have an opportunity to hear one of the finest poets of our lifetime read his work for the Midwest Poets Series’ 30th anniversary season. The reading begins at 7 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 31, in Mabee Theater.

“There is not a finer, more delicate, more sublime poet writing today in the English language,” says former Midwest Poets Series guest Gerald Stern. “It’s a poet’s job to tell us over and over what love is. Doty is this poet.”

You are sure to echo Stern’s praise when you read Fire to Fire: New and Selected Poems, which won the National Book Award, and My Alexandria, which received The Los Angeles Times Book Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award. Mark Doty is the only American poet to have won Great Britain’s T. S. Eliot Prize.

Yet prizes do not make readers fall in love with a poet. They must read poems like “House of Beauty” and “Tiara” to understand the straight-ahead passion and fierceness behind his poems. The ethical, even moral stance of the poetic voice blazes past page and microphone; when audiences hear Mark Doty, they are knocked silly.

Doty is the author of 10 full-length books of poems, including the critically acclaimed volume, School of the Arts. He is the author of six books of prose, including the memoir Dog Years, a New York Times bestseller.

Doty and Charles Simic are the only poets among 120 visitors to be invited for return appearances during the Midwest Poets Series 30 years. Doty lives in New York City and Fire Island. He teaches at Rutgers University.

Tickets are $3 at the door. No one will be denied admission for lack of funds. Books will be available at the event; a reception and book signing follow the reading. For more information, call the Center for Arts and Letters, 816-501-4607.

Musica Sacra Chorus and Orchestra Performs Italian Baroque Sacred Works

Musica Sacra Chorus and Orchestra presents a program of Italian baroque sacred music on Saturday, Feb. 16. The program features Giovanni Rovetta’s Messa à 4 voci da cappella and Antonio Caldara’s Missa Dolorosa.

For years, Rovetta worked alongside Claudio Monteverdi, the most important composer of the early Baroque, at the Basilica of St. Mark’s in Venice. Ordained a priest in 1623, Rovetta was later appointed Monteverdi’s assistant chapelmaster. In 1644, after Monteverdi’s death, Rovetta was elevated to the rank of chapelmaster of St. Mark’s and retained the post until his death nearly a quarter century later.

Psalms and Mass settings comprised the bulk of Rovetta’s output. Most of his music remains unavailable on recordings and modern musical editions.

Caldara also has a connection to St. Mark’s in Venice. He was a choirboy in the choir of St. Mark’s and may have been a student of Rovetta’s successor Giovanni Legrenzi. Later appointments in Mantua, Rome, Barcelona and Vienna attest to a successful career and widespread disposition of his works. Caldara is best known as a composer of vocal music—operas, oratorios, cantatas, masses and motets.

Caldara’s rarely performed Missa Dolorosa is scored for strings and organ and features luxuriant melodies and piquant harmonies.

The concert takes place at 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 16, at St. Francis Xavier Church, 52nd and Troost. Artistic director and conductor Timothy L. McDonald will present “Live Program Notes” at 6:15 p.m. Concert tickets are available through the Central Ticket Office at 816-235-6222, at www.rockhurst.edu/mstickets or at the performance.
Seth Johnson Brings His Paintings, Drawings, Sculpture to Greenlease Gallery for Feb. 8 Opening

In his upcoming exhibition at the Greenlease Gallery, Seth Johnson will present an installation of paintings, drawings, and sculpture.

Johnson’s new works are informed by the abundance of information and things that define the identities of individuals found in today’s contemporary culture. Working from a future imagined and projected space, the works will serve as markers and diagrams of how we currently are. Using multiple sources, Johnson contextualizes everything from plastic surgery to ergonomic shoe design.

Johnson received his MFA in 2008 from Maine College of Art, with an emphasis in studio art and critical theory, and a BFA in 2001 from the Kansas City Art Institute. Johnson has exhibited his work locally and nationally. His recent exhibits include “Center for the Advancement of Transmodern Awareness” in Kansas City; “TRY II” at the Heaven Gallery, Chicago; “Heartland” at the Smart Museum, Chicago; and “Slow Cooked” at Okay Mountain, Austin. Johnson lives in Kansas City and works as a graphic designer at Grand Arts.

Join us in the Greenlease Gallery at 6:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 8, for an artist talk, followed by a reception from 7 to 9 p.m. The exhibit continues through Saturday, March 23. For additional information, contact Anne Pearce anne.pearce@rockhurst.edu or 816-501-4407.

Boston College Law School Dean to Discuss Migration, Citizenship Through Catholic Lens

Vincent Rougeau, J.D., dean of the Boston College School of Law, will discuss the role of Roman Catholic social teaching by addressing questions of global migration and citizenship in his lecture, “Global Migration, Citizenship and Catholic Social Teaching.” The lecture begins at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 29, in Mabee Theater, Sedgwick Hall.

Catholic social teachings that emphasize the dignity of the human person, Rougeau will assert, uphold values that are essential to democratic societies like the United States. These values, he says, will point us toward principles that will guide our acceptance and treatment of new arrivals to our nation.

Rougeau earned his undergraduate degree in international relations from Brown University and his J.D. from Harvard University. He taught law at Loyola University Chicago. Rougeau served as associate dean for academic affairs at the Notre Dame Law School in South Bend, Ind. Since 2011, he has been dean of the Boston College School of Law.

Rougeau is a dynamic speaker who will address an important and timely subject. Rockhurst is pleased to host him as part of the university’s Visiting Scholar Lecture Series and the Thomas More Center for the Study of Catholic Thought and Culture.

To register your attendance to this free lecture, call 816-501-4828.
Two Evenings Tell the Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project Story in Film, Lecture

Rockhurst University's Visiting Scholar Lecture Series will embark on a two-evening examination of the infamous St. Louis housing project, Pruitt-Igoe.

On Tuesday, Feb. 19, director Chad Freidrichs will screen his acclaimed documentary, “The Pruitt-Igoe Myth: An Urban History.” The New Yorker described the film as a “devastating . . . real-life horror story.” Variety raved that it was a “Superb . . . uncommonly artful example of cinematic journalism.”

The following evening, Wednesday, Feb. 20, Freidrichs will present his lecture “The Making of ‘The Pruitt-Igoe Myth’” during which he will discuss the four years involved in producing the film that won awards from the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians and the International Documentary Association.

Both evenings begin at 7:30 p.m. in Mabee Theater, Sedgwick Hall.

“The Pruitt-Igoe Myth: An Urban History” tells the story of a public housing marvel that ended in rubble two decades later. It documents the transformation of St. Louis in the decades after World War II through the lens of the infamous housing development and the residents who called Pruitt-Igoe home.

At the film’s historical center is an analysis of the massive impact of the national urban renewal programs of the 1950s and 1960s, which prompted mass suburbanization and emptied American cities of their residents, businesses and industries. Those left behind faced a destitute, rapidly de-industrialized city that was parcelled out to downtown interests and created a city that became increasingly segregated by class and race. The city’s gripping stories of survival, adaptation and success are at the emotional heart of the film. The domestic turmoil wrought by punitive public welfare policies; the frustrating interactions with a paternalistic and cash-strapped Housing Authority; and the downward spiral of vacancy, vandalism and crime led to resident protest and action during the 1969 Rent Strike—the first in public housing history.

And yet, despite this complex history, Pruitt-Igoe has often been stereotyped. The world-famous image of its implosion has perpetuated a myth of failure—a failure that has been used to critique Modernist architecture, attack public assistance programs and stigmatize public housing residents. “The Pruitt-Igoe Myth” seeks to set the historical record straight.

Freidrichs was born in Farmington, Minn., and spent much of his youth living in small Midwest towns until the family settled in the St. Louis suburb of Wentzville. It was there that Freidrichs developed a passion for filmmaking. After a stint at NYU’s renowned Tisch School of the Arts, he returned to Missouri to begin a string of factory jobs before graduating from the University of Missouri-Columbia with a bachelor’s degree in English. After college, Freidrichs worked full time making television commercials for Columbia’s local ABC and FOX affiliates, where he honed his filmmaking skills.

Freidrichs, a professor of digital filmmaking at Stephens College, brings a unique perspective to the study of urban history and filmmaking, and we are pleased to be hosting him as part of Rockhurst University’s Visiting Scholar Lecture Series and Alpha Sigma Nu/Rev. Vincent Daues, S.J. lecture.

To register your attendance to this free lecture, call 816-501-4828.

Scholar Examines Facts, Fictions Surrounding Medieval Crusades

The Center for Catholic Studies and the Visiting Scholar Lecture Series will present a public lecture by Thomas Madden, Ph.D., who will discuss “The Crusades in Myth and History” at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 26, in Mabee Theater, Sedgwick Hall.

Madden is a distinguished author of many important studies of the Crusades. His scholarship has earned prestigious awards, including fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities. His topic is particularly relevant for contemporary society: images of the Crusades and the crusaders pervade film and popular culture, and, particularly since Sept. 11, 2001, references to the Crusades regularly appear in news stories describing current conflicts.

Interpretations of the medieval crusade movement have ranged widely throughout time, from apologetics to condemnations. Indeed, the Crusades have been characterized as everything from idealized chivalric contests against fearsome adversaries to hateful and bloody colonization efforts made against helpless populations. In the medieval European world, the Crusades were idealized as armed pilgrimages, and the Crusaders fought in the name of Christ. After the Reformation, the Crusades, like the Inquisition, were used by Protestant writers as examples of corruption in the Catholic Church.

The perception of the Crusades as unjustified, aggressive acts of the West against the Muslim world has influenced much 20th-century Crusades scholarship. However, recent scholarship has reevaluated this position. As one of the leading scholars in the field, Madden brings nuance to these polarized interpretations.

The Crusades can be neither idealized nor vilified; historical truth lies, as truth often does, somewhere in between. Madden’s exploration of the myth and the reality of the Crusades is an opportunity to explore the history of these wars, and the myths that shape our perception of them.

To register your attendance to this free lecture, call 816-501-4828. A reception follows the lecture.
Return to the Classics Discuss *The Arabian Nights* March 25

For some, the course of true love can be—well—complicated. Such was the case for the Persian king, Shahryar, who married then discovered that his bride had been unfaithful. Bruised and bitter, he had her executed. Convinced that all women were alike, the king married a succession of virgins, only to execute them the following morning before they could betray him. Enter Scheherazade, who agreed to marry the king in order to spare the rest of the realm’s virgins. But, on their wedding night, Scheherazade charmed and enthralled the king with a story. Not wanting to share the fate of Shahryar’s previous wives, Scheherazade left the tale unfinished. Curious to know the story’s end, the king postponed her execution. And so it went for 1,001 nights.

The Return to the Classics great books discussion group will take it from here when they gather to discuss *The Arabian Nights* and 28 of its tales at 7 p.m. Monday, March 25. Tom Ventresca, ‘70, will lead the discussion in Massman Hall, room 241.

To reserve a space for the book discussion, contact The Center for Arts and Letters at 816-501-4607. The $25 cost per person includes the book and refreshments; $10 for refreshments only.

Rockhurst University Players Debuts *RU Arts*

Rockhurst University Players, a student theater club, puts a new face on an old friend when it premieres *RU Arts* in February. *Theatreworks*, which served the university and Kansas City community well for 15 years, presented student written, directed and performed short plays. *RU Arts* will expand the offerings to include presentations of original music performance, visual art and dance.

This 90-minute artistic collection is not a talent show but rather a showcase of the best original arts that Rockhurst students have to offer.

*RU Arts* will be presented at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 14, and Friday, Feb. 15, in Mabee Theater, Sedgwick Hall. Donations will be accepted at the door.

For information, call Theater Director Susan Proctor at 816-501-4040.