



For immediate release

**INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF AUTHORS UNVEILS FOCUS ON IRELAND FOR '08
COLM TÓIBÍN COMES ON BOARD AS GUEST CURATOR**

TORONTO, March 12, 2008 ---- As revellers don their green garb to celebrate St Patrick's Day, **International Readings at Harbourfront (IRAH)** unveils a new programming initiative for the **29th annual International Festival of Authors (IFOA)**, October 22 – November 1, 2008. Award-winning author **Colm Tóibín** joins IFOA as its **first ever guest curator**, with the vision of bringing a **special focus on Irish writers and writing** to the 11-day festival.

This new initiative sees a dozen authors participating in events including readings, interviews, round-table discussions and social occasions, infusing the IFOA with an Irish flavour throughout. Top name authors already confirmed include: **John Brady, Emma Donoghue, Anne Enright, Victoria Glendinning, Colm Tóibín, and Maeve Binchy**, who lends her voice to introduce all Irish Focus onstage events.

"Harbourfront Centre's IFOA is the most important showcase for international writing in North America," says Colm Tóibín. "For Irish writers it has been a tremendously important way to reach readers. This year, it will be great to collaborate with Harbourfront to showcase what is new and exciting in Irish literature."

"This collaboration with a guest curator is a first for IFOA," says Geoffrey Taylor, Director of International Readings at Harbourfront and IFOA. "We are delighted to extend a special welcome to writers representing the absolute best of contemporary Irish literature, and hope this will be the first of many such partnerships."

The **International Festival of Authors** takes place October 22 – November 1, 2008, at Toronto's Harbourfront Centre: 235, Queens Quay West, Toronto. Complete line-up and tickets-on-sale date yet to be announced. The Irish Focus at IFOA is supported in part by Culture Ireland, the Irish State Agency established in 2005 to promote the best of Ireland's arts and culture internationally.

Colm Tóibín is the award-winning author of five novels, including *The Blackwater Lightship*, a finalist for the Man Booker Prize, and *The Master*, a finalist for the Man Booker Prize and winner of the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for Fiction. His most recent book, *Mothers and Sons*, a collection of stories, was published in 2007. He lives in Dublin.

For details of other upcoming events at IRAH, the public may visit **www.readings.org** or call the Harbourfront Centre Box Office at 416-973-4000.

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Since its inception in 1974, International Readings at Harbourfront (IRAH) has hosted more than 5,000 authors from 100 countries, including fifteen Nobel Laureates. Our season includes the weekly International Readings at Harbourfront (IRAH); the annual International Festival of Authors (IFOA) (October 22–November 1, 2008), including YoungIFOA (October 29–31, 2008); the annual ALOUD: a Celebration for Young Readers (2009 dates TBC); and A Forest of Reading® Festival of Trees (May 21–22, 2008).

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