

For immediate release

RODDY DOYLE interviewed by DON McKELLAR

PEN Canada's 25th anniversary Gala Benefit opens International Festival of Authors

TORONTO, July 15, 2008 ----- To lead off its 25th anniversary year, **PEN Canada holds its gala benefit on the opening night of the International Festival of Authors (IFOA)** on **October 22** (Festival continues through November 1). In an event that promises to be one of the most talked about of the Festival, Dublin-based Booker Prize-winner **Roddy Doyle** makes a rare appearance in Toronto and is interviewed on stage by Tony and Genie award-winning writer, actor and director **Don McKellar**. Guests at this Gala Benefit will enjoy an exclusive cocktail reception overlooking Lake Ontario with the participants and special guests prior to the onstage event. The event begins at **6pm on October 22** at Harbourfront Centre's Premiere Dance Theatre, 207 Queens Quay West, Toronto.

Roddy Doyle is the author of seven acclaimed novels, including *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*, which won the Man Booker Prize, and *The Commitments*, which was made into the 1991 film of the same name. He comes to Toronto in support of the work of PEN Canada. **Don McKellar** won a Tony Award for his play *The Drowsy Chaperone*, and wrote the screenplays for *The Red Violin* and *Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn Gould*, and for an adaptation of José Saramago's *Blindness*, which he also directed. *Blindness* was recently hailed at the Cannes Film Festival and is scheduled to open the Toronto International Film Festival in 2008.

Tickets to the PEN Canada Gala Benefit are priced at \$125 and are **now on sale**. Proceeds go to PEN Canada to support its vital work on behalf of writers in exile and freedom of speech.

About PEN Canada: PEN Canada is a centre of International PEN that campaigns on behalf of writers around the world persecuted for the expression of their thoughts. PEN Canada works on behalf of freedom of speech as a basic human right.

For more information about PEN Canada, the public may visit www.pencanada.ca.

About IFOA: IFOA is part of the annual season at International Readings at Harbourfront. The 29th annual IFOA runs from October 22 to November 1, 2008, and includes YoungIFOA on October 28, 30 and 31. Roddy Doyle is one of a number of acclaimed Irish authors taking part in this year's IFOA as part of a special focus on that country's writers and writing.

For more information about the International Festival of Authors the public may visit www.readings.org or call the Harbourfront Centre Box Office on 416.973.4000.

-30-

MEDIA CONTACT:

For PEN Canada: Aleksandra Bida: 416.703.8448 x 25

For IFOA or other International Readings at Harbourfront programmes:

Becky Toyne: 416.973.5836; btoyne@harbourfrontcentre.com