

WRIT LARGE

Literary love affair

The Hours' author, a Man Asian Literary prize winner and Fifty Shades Of Grey at this year's Writers Fest

SINGAPORE – For Michael Cunningham, winning the Pulitzer Prize back in 1999 for his novel *The Hours* was a “complete surprise”. “It also meant a lot more people waiting for me to write *The Hours* all over again,” he quipped.

The American author behind the eponymous Oscar-winning film adaptation is one of the highlighted writers arriving for this year's Singapore Writers Festival. Speaking at yesterday's media launch via Skype from Massachusetts, he will be talking about the “love affair between writers and readers” in one of two main SWF Lectures, along with Taiwanese author Huang Chun-ming.

Held from Nov 2 to 11, the annual event will feature over 200 free and ticketed programmes and showcase around 138 Singapore and 45 international writers. Also in the line-up are acclaimed travel writer Pico Iyer, professional wrestler Mick Foley, Man Asian Literary Prize 2011 recipient Shin Kyung-Sook, Malaysian writer and activist Marina Mahathir, and former President SR Nathan. This year's Literary Pioneer Showcase will be on the late Masuri SN, the father of modern Malay poetry in Singapore.

Riffing on the theme of Origins, the

festival would have the quirky and the serious rub shoulders. Debates and talks tackle topics as diverse as the Middle East and the Arab Spring phenomenon, the buzz around the women's erotica book blockbuster *Fifty Shades Of Grey*, and the art of parody writing with a panel comprising blogger Mr Brown and the folks behind TV show *The Noose* and the Chestnuts stage revue series.

MediaCorp is also set to participate in a big way. Its e-bookstore, ilovebooks.com, is the festival's first official e-book-



> Singapore Writers Festival runs from Nov 2 to 11. Early bird tickets are available from Aug 31 to Sept 28 from Sistic. For more information, visit www.singapore-writersfestival.com or their Facebook page.

store. It is also sponsoring one of the festival's main pavilions at the Singapore Management University's Campus Green, where, aside from hosting event, will be the venue for two launches: The e-book version of *The Diary Of Amos Lee 4: Lights, Camera, Superstar!*, by author Adeline Foo and illustrator Stephanie Wong; and the Malay-English interactive children's book *Tabungan Alysha* (Alysha Saves

The Day) produced by MediaCorp's Warna 94.2FM and Interactive Media Division.

“We've always wanted to be part of the reading community. And for writers, we won't just focus on international writers but, more importantly, local ones. This is a first for us and we would love to continue,” said Ethel Tan, MediaCorp Interactive Media VP for eCommerce.

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Michael Cunningham.
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