

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ADULT STAGES

## ALEXANDER CHEE SELECTS TRACK (SPONSORED BY MAILCHIMP)

2016 marks the third year for the author-curated track. The handpicked selections bring a freshness and diversity of ideas, experiences and viewpoints to the AJC Decatur Book Festival (AJC DBF). Following Roxane Gay's stellar turn in 2015, **Alexander Chee** picks his dream team to speak on themes related to how history tends to repeat itself. Whiting Award-winner Chee presents *Queen of the Night*, which follows Paris Opera sensation Lilliet Berne, as she attains a critical original role but realizes it's based on a hidden piece of her past. Emerging talent **Kaitlyn Greenidge** discusses her novel, *We Love You, Charlie Freeman*, which begins as a story of family but becomes an exploration of America's failure to find a language to talk about race. In *Rich and Pretty*, debut author **Rumaan Alam** provides an insightful look into how the relationship between two best friends changes when they are no longer coming of age but learning how to live adult lives. Award-winning poet **Idra Novey** brings her brilliant debut novel, *Ways to Disappear*, which follows the disappearance of a famous Brazilian novelist and the young translator who turns her life upside down to follow her author's trail. **Samantha Hunt** reads from *Mr. Splitfoot*, an exciting contemporary gothic novel that tracks two women in two eras as they march towards a mysterious reckoning. In her book *Witches of America*, **Alex Mar** illuminates the world of witchcraft while grappling in fresh and unexpected ways with the question of underlying faith. **Sunil Yapa** discusses his electrifying debut novel, *Your Heart Is a Muscle the Size of a Fist*, which is set amid the heated conflict of Seattle's 1999 WTO protests. **Garrard Conley** reads from *Boy Erased*, his beautiful, raw and compassionate memoir about identity, love and understanding, while essayist **Kiese Laymon** shares his experiences about growing up with racial violence both within his own family and in the culture at large. In *All the Single Ladies: Unmarried Women and the Rise of an Independent Nation*, award-winning journalist **Rebecca Traister** provides a remarkable portrait of contemporary American life and how we got here, through the lens of the single American woman.

## SCIENCE TRACK

Partnering with the Atlanta Science Tavern, the AJC DBF continues to bring some of the most brilliant minds to the festival. **Frans de Waal**, Emory University professor and the director of the Living Links Center of Emory's Yerkes National Primate Research Center, offers *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?*, which encourages readers to rethink everything they thought they knew about animal and human intelligence. Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Mathematics at Emory University, **Ken Ono** examines one of the most brilliant mathematical minds with *My Search for Ramanujan: How I Learned to Count*. Former NPR science reporter **Frank Browning** brings *The Fate of Gender: Nature, Nurture, and the Human Future*, which explores the fast-changing global landscape of gender today. Authors **Jon Willis** (*All These Worlds Are Yours: The Scientific Search for Alien Life*) and **Priyamvada Natarajan** (*Mapping the Heavens: The Radical*

*Scientific Ideas that Revealed the Cosmos*) look differently at the stars, the universe and the search for alien life. **Kayt Sukel** examines our capacity and understanding of risk in *The Art of Risk: The New Science of Courage, Caution and Chance*. Lastly, archeology topics come to the forefront from two different perspectives: **Lydia Pyne** examines the importance of human fossils in *Seven Skeletons: The Evolution of the World's Most Famous Human Fossils* while **Elizabeth Reitz** and **Martha Zierden** understand cultural history with *Charleston: An Archaeology of Life in a Coastal Community*.

## POETRY TRACK

Poetry has always been a highlight of the AJC DBF and the 2016 line-up is one of the strongest the festival has seen. Considered one of the leading poets of his generation, **Kevin Young**, the Charles Howard Candler Professor of Creative Writing and English at Emory University and the Curator of Emory's Raymond Danowski Poetry Library, will read from *Blue Laws: Selected and Uncollected Poems, 1995-2015*, which is a compilation of the highlights, "B sides" and "bonus tracks" from his extraordinary career. Talented Georgia-based poets **James Davis May**, **Sandra Meek** and **Richie Hofmann** read from their respective collections that offer different perspectives of the human experience. Award-winning **Tyehimba Jess** brings to the AJC DBF his new collection, *Olio*, which presents the sweat and story behind America's blues, worksongs and church hymns from before the Civil War through World War I. National Book Award finalist **Monica Youn** will read from her acclaimed new collection *Blackacre*, which examines the limits of the imagination's ability to transform what is given. **David Kirby**, who has received numerous Pushcart Prizes and other awards for his work, examines our extraordinarily human condition through the lens of our ordinary daily lives in his collection *Get Up, Please*.

## HISTORY TRACK (SPONSORED BY THE ATLANTA HISTORY CENTER)

The History Track continues to expose and educate festivalgoers to stories from our past, from little-known characters to major events. Award-winning poet and Atlanta-area native **Patrick Phillips** launches *Blood at the Root*, a sweeping American tale that spans centuries of racial injustice in Forsyth County, Georgia. Phillips breaks the century-long silence of his hometown and uncovers a history of racial terrorism that continues to shape America today. Co-author **Michael Graetz** examines the Warren Burger Supreme Court in *The Burger Court and the Rise of the Judicial Right*, which finds that it was not a "moderate" or transitional court, as often portrayed, but a conservative one that still defines the constitutional landscape we live in today. Journalist and author **Laurence Leamer** brings *The Lynching: The Epic Courtroom Battle That Brought Down the Klan*, which tells the spellbinding true story of a brutal race-based killing in 1981 and the subsequent trials that undid the Ku Klux Klan. In *The Firebrand and the First Lady: Portrait of a Friendship*, **Patricia Bell-Scott** tells the story of how a brilliant writer-turned-activist and granddaughter of a mulatto slave forged an enduring relationship with Eleanor Roosevelt, first lady of the United States, which changed each of their lives and helped alter the course of race and racism in America. **James Lee McDonough** introduces a controversial historical figure in the biography *William Tecumseh Sherman: In the Service of My Country: A Life*. General Sherman's 1864 burning of Atlanta solidified his legacy as a ruthless leader yet he proved far more complex than his legendary military tactics reveal.

## COOKING & FOOD

The AJC DBF's national reputation for celebrating the art, science and wonder of food in publishing continues to grow exponentially, as highlighted by the cooking stage's new location on the MARTA plaza. James Beard Award-winner and noted bread authority **Peter Reinhart** talks about mastering

(continued)

the art of breadmaking. **Meathead Goldwyn**, founder and editor of the world's most popular BBQ and grilling website (amazingribs.com), demos from *Meathead: The Science of Great Barbecue and Grilling*, which is the definitive guide to the concepts, methods, equipment and accessories of barbecue and grilling. James Beard Award-winning cookbook author **Cynthia Graubart** launches *Chicken*, which packs all the know-how that cooks need to make irresistible chicken dishes for everyday and special occasions. **Ronni Lundy** takes attendees on an exploration of the foodways, people and places of Appalachia with *Victuals: An Appalachian Journey, with Recipes*. Noted canning expert **Marisa McClellan** guides home canners on how to enjoy the flavors of the season without refined sugars in *Naturally Sweet Food in Jars*. James Beard Award-winning writer **Rien Fertel** chronicles the uniquely southern art of whole hog barbecue in *The One True Barbecue: Fire, Smoke, and the Pitmasters Who Cook the Whole Hog*. **Robert F. Moss** and **Fred Minnick** will talk about bourbon and Southern spirits, while former *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* food editor **Anne Byrn** discusses the fascinating history of cakes in her book *American Cake*. The AJC DBF is launching a celebration of legacy cookbooks, recognizing those cooks who defined or changed the way we understand and cook food. Noted culinary journalist **Ted Lee** will talk with James Beard Award semi-finalist **Todd Richards**, executive chef at White Oaks Kitchen & Cocktails, who will demo from *The Taste of Country Cooking* by the late Edna Lewis, who inspired a generation of young chefs and ensured traditional Southern foods and preparations would live forever.

## CIVIL & HUMAN RIGHTS

Celebrating the greatest legacy of the Atlanta region, the Civil & Human Rights Track provides attendees an opportunity to examine the painful civil injustices in our country and abroad, and offers a place and context to discuss and apply knowledge to and lessons learned by our world today and in the future. Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor of African American Studies at Emory University, **Carol Anderson** presents *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*. Based on her remarkable op-ed in *The Washington Post* following the events in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014, the book adds an important new dimension to the national conversation about race in America. In *Love Wins: The Lovers and Lawyers Who Fought the Landmark Case for Marriage Equality*, investigative journalist **Debbie Cenziper** and plaintiff **Jim Obergefell** tell the fascinating and moving story of the lovers, lawyers, judges and activists behind the groundbreaking Supreme Court case that led to one of the most important national civil rights victories in decades. In *Incarceration Nations: A Journey to Justice in Prisons Around the World*, journalist and professor **Baz Dreisinger** travels behind bars in nine countries to rethink the state of justice in a global context. **Bernard Edward Powers, Jr.** and **Marjory Wentworth** recount the tragic events of June 17, 2015, in *We Are Charleston: Tragedy and Triumph at Mother Emanuel*. The book not only recounts the events of that terrible day but also offers a history lesson that reveals a deeper look at the suffering, triumph and even the ongoing rage of the people who formed Mother Emanuel A.M.E. Church and the wider denominational movement.

## FICTION

**Jacqueline Woodson**, the acclaimed *New York Times* bestselling and National Book Award-winning author, brings to the AJC DBF her first adult novel in 20 years, *Another Brooklyn*. Running into a long-ago friend sets memory from the 1970s in motion for August, transporting her to a time and a place where friendship was everything until it wasn't. **Ron Rash**, author of the 2009 PEN/Faulkner Finalist novel *Serena*, in addition to other prize-winning novels, is launching his latest novel, *The Risen*, a tale of two brothers whose lives are altered irrevocably by the events of one long-ago summer. **Ann Hood** will present her newest book, *The Book That Matters Most*, which follows a mother's mission to find an important book from her childhood and its author, taking her on a quest

(continued)

that unravels the secrets of her past and offers a chance to remake lives. Award-winning Decatur author **Thomas Mullen** launches his latest novel, *Darktown*, at the AJC DBF. Set in the postwar, pre-civil rights South, *Darktown* is a vivid, smart, intricately plotted crime saga that explores the timely issues of race, law enforcement and the uneven scales of justice. *New York Times* bestselling author **Emily Giffin** will present her latest novel, *First Comes Love*. Emotionally honest and utterly enthralling, *First Comes Love* is a story about family, friendship and the courage to follow your own heart. **Carolyn Parkhurst**, *The New York Times* bestselling author of *The Dogs of Babel*, *The Nobodies Album* and others, introduces her new book, *Harmony*, a taut, emotionally wrenching story of how a seemingly “normal” family can become desperate enough to leave everything behind and move to a “family camp” in New Hampshire. *The New York Times* bestselling author Brad Meltzer brings his latest thriller, *The House of Secrets*, following Hazel Nash, who has to solve a murder and discover her father’s secrets.

## NON-FICTION

Pulitzer Prize-winning and bestselling author **Rick Bragg** presents *My Southern Journey: True Stories from the Heart of the South*, a poignant and wryly funny collection of essays on life in the South. **Rob Spillman**, editor of the influential literary magazine *Tin House*, reads from his memoir *All Tomorrow's Parties*, which narrates a colorful, literary and music-filled coming-of-age portrait of an artist’s life that is also a cultural exploration of a shifting Berlin. In *Pit Bull: The Battle Over an American Icon*, award-winning journalist **Bronwen Dickey** offers a clear-eyed portrait of this extraordinary breed and an insightful view of Americans’ relationship with their dogs. In *Where We Want to Live: Reclaiming Infrastructure for a New Generation of Cities*, **Ryan Gravel**, creator of the Atlanta Beltline, argues for leveraging existing infrastructure to reconceive how we live in American cities. In her book *Agnostic: A Spirited Manifesto*, award-winning writer and journalist **Lesley Hazelton** gives voice to the case for agnosticism, breaking it free of its stereotypes and celebrates it as a reasoned, revealing and sustaining stance toward life.

## INSTITUTE FOR CHILD SUCCESS TRACK

Partnering with both **AIR Serenbe**, the artist-in-residence program at Serenbe, and the **Institute for Child Success** (ICS), the early childhood research and policy think tank, this new track will bring together a variety of authors and artists who collectively share a passion for the power of stories in the lives of children. It will feature performances by spoken word artists **Mahogany Browne** and **Anis Mojgani** and panel discussions with authors, illustrators and thought leaders, including children’s author **Jeanne Birdsall** and **Joe Waters**, executive vice president with the ICS. This exciting new track will celebrate the importance of stories in the shaping of children’s own personal narratives, conceptions of self and of the world and their location within our broader cultural narratives of race, gender and class.

## SPECIAL PANELS

This year at the DBF, we have partnered with iconic organizations and individuals that highlight unique literary voices. Legendary poet **Coleman Barks** reads with editor **Stephen Corey** to celebrate the 70th anniversary of *The Georgia Review*, discussing the history, present and possibly future of the highly regarded journal of arts and letters, which Corey edits. Notable digital publishing visionary **Richard Nash**, former head of Soft Skull Press, Cursor and Red Lemonade and named one of the top 50 Visionaries Changing Your World by Utne Reader, leads a discussion on the blurring of fact and fiction, on reading and writing and writing for a living. The panel includes **Amy Hungerford**, Director of Humanities and Professor of English at Yale University and author of the upcoming book

(continued)

*Making Literature Now*, and **Jane Friedman**, founder and editor of *The Hot Sheet*, the essential publishing industry newsletter for authors and the former publisher of *Writer's Digest*.

## **ART|DBF**

**ArtsATL** is thrilled to collaborate with DBF on this year's Art|DBF programming. This year, ArtsATL plans to incorporate a curated selection of performances and installations directly within the festival's programming. The lineup will include return performances from favorites of previous years, including **7 Stages** and the **High Museum of Art**. ArtsATL will also introduce art installations in specific venues by local artists to enhance visitors' visual experience during readings and lectures.