

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

17 September 2009

THE CAINE PRIZE
FOR AFRICAN WRITING
Ex Africa semper aliquid novi

Writing Africa – Caine Prize 10th Anniversary Tour

“Over the past ten years, the Caine Prize has done a great deal to foster writing in Africa and bring exciting new African writers to the attention of wider audiences.” **JM Coetzee**

"That's what the Caine Prize is about: celebrating the genius of human diversity... the idea is to enrich the world through its greater contact with Africa, and to enrich Africa through its greater contact with the world." **Ben Okri**

“The Caine Prize has played a vital role in discovering and supporting new writing from Africa, breathing fresh life into the renaissance surge in African literature.” **Wole Soyinka**

This year the Caine Prize for African Writing celebrates 10 years of the prestigious short story prize. An exciting, seven date UK-wide tour supported by Arts Council England, features Caine Prize winners and short listed authors Brian Chikwava (winner 2004), Chika Unigwe (shortlisted 2004), Binyavanga Wainaina (winner 2002) and EC Osondu (winner 2009). Africa’s highest literary reward-known as the African Booker has bolstered and launched the careers of a number of many of Africa’s best young writers. Past winners have gone on to publish novels and reach the shortlist for other esteemed literary prizes. This tour is a unique opportunity for a wider audience to engage with some of Africa’s finest talent, and showcases the intelligence, ingenuity and irreverence of these young writers.

Tour details

Sat 10th October 2.30 – 4pm

British Library, Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB

Tickets: £6/£4 conc.

Box Office: 01937 546 546

<http://www.bl.uk/whatson/events/event95570.html>

Chika Unigwe, Brian Chikwava and Binyavanga Wainaina. Introduced by Ben Okri, chaired by Aminatta Forna - followed by a reception
(Organised with the Royal African Society)

Sun 11th October 12-1pm

Cheltenham Literature Festival, The Inkpot, GL50 1QA

Box Office: 0844 576 8970

www.cheltenhamfestivals.com

Chika Unigwe, Brian Chikwava and Binyavanga Wainaina
(Supported by Sir Michael McWilliam and Jonathan Taylor)

Tues 13th October 6pm

University of Kent, Grimond Lecture theatre 3, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 7NF

Tickets: £4 / £2 Concession

Tickets may be obtained either at the door or by sending a cheque or postal order to Caine Prize Evening, School of English, Rutherford Extension, University Of Kent, Canterbury, CT2 7NF

Book: english-office@kent.ac.uk

Chika Unigwe, Brian Chikwava and Binyavanga Wainaina chaired by Abdulrazak Gurnah

Thurs 15th October 6.30pm

University of East Anglia, The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich, NR4 7TJ

Tickets: free, Readings followed by wine reception

Booking: caineprizereadings@uea.ac.uk

Chika Unigwe, Brian Chikwava and Binyavanga Wainaina

Friday 16th October 7.30pm

Ilkley Literature Festival, Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman. LS29 9DT

Tickets: £4/£3 conc

Box Office: 01943 816 714

www.ilkleyliteraturefestival.org.uk

Chika Unigwe, Brian Chikwava and EC Osondu chaired by Nii Ayikwei Parkes
(Supported by the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society)

Saturday 17th October 7pm

Newcastle Centre for the Literary Arts, Newcastle University, Culture Lab, NE1 7RU

Tickets: £6 / £4

Box Office: 0191 222 7619

Chika Unigwe, Brian Chikwava and EC Osondu chaired by Laura Fish

Monday 19th October 8pm

Lancaster Lit Fest, Storey Auditorium, House Lane, LA1 1TH

Tickets: £7.50 / £6

Box Office: 01524 582 394

Chika Unigwe & EC Osondu chaired by Graham Mort

www.litfest.org

Writers' biographies

Binyavanga Wainaina won the Caine Prize in 2002 for his short story "Discovering Home" and famously used his prize money to set up the literary journal *Kwani?* in Kenya now in its fifth issue.

He writes a weekly column for the *Mail and Guardian* in South Africa and his writing has also appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, *Granta* and *National Geographic*. He is the newly appointed Director of the Chinua Achebe Centre for African Literature and Languages at Bard College, New York and is completing his first novel.

Chika Unigwe was shortlisted for the Caine Prize in 2004 for her short story "The Secret" and was awarded a PhD from the University of Leiden, The Netherlands, in the same year. She won the 2003 BBC Short Story Competition for her story "Borrowed Smile", a Commonwealth Short Story Award for "Weathered Smiles" and a Flemish literary prize for "De Smaak van Sneeuw". Chika Unigwe's stories have been broadcast on BBC World Service, Radio Nigeria, and other Commonwealth Radio Stations. Her second novel, *Fata Morgana*, was published in Dutch in 2008 and is published in English as *On Black Sisters Street* by Jonathan Cape.

Brian Chikwava won the Caine Prize in 2004 for his short story "Seventh Street Alchemy" and published his first novel *Harare North* (Jonathan Cape) in April 2009 to critical acclaim. He was a Charles Pick fellow at the University of East Anglia, and his work has appeared in short story collections published by Weaver Press, Jacana, Picador Africa, Umuzi and in the journals *World Literature Today*, *Wasafiri*, *Moving Worlds*, *Literary Review*, *The Literary Encyclopaedia* and others. Some of his stories have also been broadcast on BBC Radios 3 and 4 and Worldservice and is currently working on a short story collection.

EC Osondu was born in Nigeria and worked as an advertising copywriter for many years before moving to New York to study for his MFA in Creative Writing at Syracuse University. He has won the Allen and Nirelle Galso Prize for Fiction and his story "a Letter from Home" was judged one of 'The Top Ten Stories on the internet' in 2006. In 2007 his story "Jimmy Carter's Eyes" was short-listed for the Caine Prize and in 2009 his story "Waiting" won the coveted prize. He now teaches at Providence University on Rhode Island. A short story collection will be published by Harper Collins in 2010.

Notes for editors

The Caine Prize, awarded annually for African creative writing, is named after the late Sir Michael Caine, former Chairman of Booker plc and Chairman of the Booker Prize management committee for nearly 25 years. The Prize is awarded for a short story by an African writer published in English (indicative length 3,000 to 10,000 words). An "African writer" will normally be taken to mean someone who was born in Africa, or who is a national of an African country, or whose parents are African, and whose work has reflected that cultural background.

The African winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Wole Soyinka, Nadine Gordimer and J M Coetzee, are Patrons of The Caine Prize, as is Chinua Achebe. Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne is President of the Council and Jonathan Taylor is the Chairman.

Royal African Society is Britain's prime Africa organisation, fostering a better understanding of Africa in the UK and throughout the world. Its in-depth, long term knowledge of the continent and its people makes it the first stop for anyone who loves Africa and wishes to know more about the continent.

Arts Council England is the national development agency for the arts in England, distributing public money from the Government and the National Lottery.

For more information, photos and to arrange interviews, contact:

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