



## TEXAS BOOK FESTIVAL REVEALS AUTHORS PARTICIPATING IN VIRTUAL FIRST EDITION LITERARY GALA

*The 2020 Virtual First Edition Literary Gala will feature emcee Michael Ian Black and authors Nick Hornby, Julia Alvarez, and Natasha Trethewey*

**AUSTIN, TX (September 2, 2020)** -- The Texas Book Festival is thrilled to feature some of literature's brightest stars at the annual First Edition Literary Gala, taking place on Friday, November 6 at 7:30 p.m. This year's virtual evening will feature some of the most notable authors in publishing, including acclaimed novelist and memoirist Nick Hornby, National Medal of Arts recipient Julia Alvarez, and Pulitzer Prize-winning author and former United States Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey. Comedian and author Michael Ian Black will emcee the virtual evening.

"Every year, the Texas Book Festival gala is a can't-miss event," says Sarah Queen, TBF Board of Directors Chair. "That still holds true for this year's Virtual Gala, and we're excited that the virtual program will allow our friends across Texas and beyond to join us in supporting literacy and literary programming in Texas."

This year, the First Edition Literary Gala will offer attendees the opportunity to partake in the exclusive program from the comfort of their own homes. Each ticket and sponsorship comes with access to the virtual program and to headlining ticketed author sessions during the Festival, as well as other literary favors and benefits. The Gala will also feature a virtual silent auction with exceptional vacation homes, private author experiences, and other packages generously donated by local businesses and artists. Anna Hargrove and Dalton Young are this year's Gala co-chairs.

Last year's First Edition Literary Gala raised more than \$700,000 for the Texas Book Festival. Proceeds keep the annual Festival and Texas Teen Book Festival free and open to the public and fund TBF's outreach programs. This year, TBF awarded \$100,000 in grants to 42 Texas public libraries and, through its Reading Rock Stars program, provided nearly 9,300 books to students in Title I schools across Texas.

Gala sponsorship options start at \$600 for a single ticket, which includes a pass to all ticketed Festival events as well as the Virtual Gala, a printed Gala program, a Festival author book, and sponsor recognition on the TBF website. Additional sponsorship levels include a viewing gift basket with a cocktail kit or bottle of wine, snacks, guest passes to the Virtual Gala, virtual author meet-and-greets, Gala author books, virtual cooking demonstrations, and more. Visit [texasbookfestival.org/gala](https://texasbookfestival.org/gala) for all Gala sponsorship opportunities.

This year's featured authors include the following:

**Julia Alvarez:** Julia Alvarez left the Dominican Republic for the United States in 1960 at the age of ten. She is the author of six novels, three books of nonfiction, three collections of poetry, and eleven books for children and young adults. She has taught and mentored writers in schools and communities across America and, until her retirement in 2016, was a writer-in-residence at

Middlebury College. Her work has garnered wide recognition, including a Latina Leader Award in Literature from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, the Hispanic Heritage Award in Literature, the Woman of the Year by *Latina* magazine, and inclusion in the New York Public Library's program "The Hand of the Poet: Original Manuscripts by 100 Masters, from John Donne to Julia Alvarez." *In the Time of the Butterflies*, with over one million copies in print, was selected by the National Endowment for the Arts for its national Big Read program, and in 2013, President Obama awarded Alvarez the National Medal of Arts in recognition of her extraordinary storytelling. Her latest novel, *Afterlife*, the story of a retired college English teacher who finds a pregnant undocumented teenager on her doorstep, will be featured at TBF.

**Michael Ian Black:** Michael Ian Black is an actor, comedian, and writer who started his career with the sketch comedy show *The State* on MTV and has created and starred in many other television shows. Movie appearances include *Wet Hot American Summer*, *The Baxter*, and *Sextuplets*. Black is the author of several books for children, including the award-winning *I'm Bored, I'm Sad, and I'm Worried* and the parody *A Child's First Book of Trump*. His books for adults include the memoirs *You're Not Doing It Right* and *Navel Gazing* and the essay collection *My Custom Van*. Black also co-authored with Meghan McCain *America, You Sexy Bitch*. As a stand-up comedian, Michael regularly tours the country and he has released several comedy albums. His podcasts include *Mike & Tom Eat Snacks*, with Tom Cavanagh; *Topics*, with Michael Showalter; *How to Be Amazing*; and *Obscure*. He lives in Connecticut with his wife and two children. His book *A Better Man: A (Mostly Serious) Letter to My Son*, heartfelt meditation on toxic masculinity addressed to his college-age son, will be featured at TBF.

**Nick Hornby:** Nick Hornby is the author of several internationally bestselling novels, including *High Fidelity*, *About a Boy*, and *A Long Way Down*, as well as several works of nonfiction, including *Fever Pitch*, *Songbook*, and *Ten Years in the Tub*. He has written screenplay adaptations of Lynn Barber's *An Education*, which was nominated for an Academy Award, Cheryl Strayed's *Wild*, and Colm Tóibín's *Brooklyn*. He lives in London. At TBF, Hornby will be presenting *Just Like You*, a funny, charming portrayal of a middle-aged almost-divorcee who unexpectedly falls for a younger man.

**Natasha Trethewey:** Natasha Trethewey is a former US Poet Laureate and the author of five collections of poetry, as well as a book of creative nonfiction. She is currently the Board of Trustees Professor of English at Northwestern University. In 2007 she won the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry for her collection *Native Guard*. *Memorial Drive*, Trethewey's memoir remembering the life of her mother, who was murdered by her former stepfather when Trethewey was 19, will be featured at TBF.

TBF's full author lineup will be revealed in mid-September. The 2020 Virtual Texas Book Festival will take place online from October 31 through November 15. For more information on the Texas Book Festival, please visit [www.texasbookfestival.org](http://www.texasbookfestival.org) and follow along on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @texasbookfest.

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#### **ABOUT TEXAS BOOK FESTIVAL:**

With a vision to inspire Texans of all ages to love reading, the Texas Book Festival connects authors and readers through experiences that celebrate the culture of literacy, ideas, and imagination. Founded in

1995 by former First Lady Laura Bush, Mary Margaret Farabee, and a group of volunteers, the nonprofit Texas Book Festival promotes the joys of reading and writing through its annual Festival, the Texas Teen Book Festival, the Reading Rock Stars Title I elementary school program, the Real Reads Title I middle and high school program, grants to Texas libraries, and year-round literary programming. The 2020 Virtual Texas Book Festival will take place from October 31 through November 15. Thanks to generous donors, sponsors, and volunteers, the Festival remains free and open to the public. Visit [www.texasbookfestival.org](http://www.texasbookfestival.org) for more information, and join the conversation using the hashtag #txbookfest on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @texasbookfest.

**ABOUT TEXAS TEEN BOOK FESTIVAL:**

The Texas Teen Book Festival celebrates the teen reading experience by inviting fans to visit with some of the most popular and critically acclaimed young adult authors in the country. The Texas Teen Book Festival was born as the Austin Teen Book Festival in 2009 when librarian Heather Schubert partnered with BookPeople to organize a gathering at Westlake High School. Five hundred people and 16 authors attended the first year. The event continued to grow, and in 2011-2013 was sponsored by the Austin Public Library Friends Foundation. In 2014 the Fest became a program of the Texas Book Festival and was renamed the Texas Teen Book Festival. One of the largest gatherings of its kind anywhere, the annual Fest takes place in the fall. The 2020 Texas Teen Book Festival will take place virtually October 31 and November 1, during the Texas Book Festival. For more information, see [texasteenbookfestival.org](http://texasteenbookfestival.org).