

Word X Word Performance Festival Returns to Downtown Pittsfield, MA, August 13 - 20th

July 7, 2011 – The 2011 Word X Word Festival – a week of live performances celebrating words written, spoken, and sung – will take place at 15 venues scattered throughout resurgent downtown Pittsfield, and will feature more than 60 performances of original song, poetry, theater, fiction, and storytelling.

The 2011 festival runs August 13-20, kicking off with a party on the roof of the historic Greystone Building, an event named one of the hottest parties of 2010. It wraps up a week later with a closing show at the historic Colonial Theatre featuring Australian recording star Mia Dyson, national spoken word performer Buddy Wakefield, and Boston Music Awards "new artist of the year" Kingsley Flood.

Every year WXW kicks off with its Gala Party on the Rooftop of the Greystone Building. This year Raleigh, NC band Jack the Radio brings its funky beats to this strictly limited ticketed event. Also this year in a surprise announcement, WXW has confirmed Son Volt front man and Uncle Tupelo founder, Jay Farrar to a rare solo performance in an undisclosed venue in downtown Pittsfield. Sarah Lee Guthrie and Johnny Irion will play a special sneak preview show at Mission on August 12 at 8pm.

The Main portion of the festival begins Sunday August 14th, with a block party at Palace Park from 3pm-8pm featuring music, spoken word, and local concessions. The official opening Show is Sunday night at the Compuworks loft featuring Taylor Mali, Iyeoka Okoawo, and Williamstown band Darlingside.

Other notable performers for the 2011 festival include the bands Abbie Barrett and the Last Date, and the Two Man Gentleman Band, as well as spoken word superstars Cristin Aptowicz (3-time national poetry Slam Champion) and Rachel McKibbens (2009 Women of the World Poetry Slam Champion). The fiction and storytelling lineup features bestselling novelist Wesley Stace (a.k.a. singer/songwriter John Wesley Harding), Julie Klausner (one of Salon.com's "10 Funniest Women Writers on the Internet"), and critically acclaimed writer Jami Attenberg.

Word X Word has carved out a reputation for showcasing emerging artists – The Low Anthem in 2009, Langhorne Slim in 2010 – on the verge of national recognition, and for shining a spotlight on performance genres that had never before had a home among the bounty of cultural offerings in the Berkshires. The spoken word performers at WXW are consistently given high marks for originality and impact, and have greatly enhanced the reputation of WXW as a festival breaking new ground with its emphasis on the transformative power of live performance.

Theater is given a much larger presence in this year's festival. Highlights include the Barrington Stage world premiere staged reading of Mark St. Germain newest play, "Mrs. Lincoln's Séance." New Stage Performing Arts is presenting several new and local works in their Burbank Extension in the Beacon Cinema Building. WAM Theater is bringing their Instant Theater to Word X Word this year, with a rehearsal and performance at the palace park Tent venue. Word X Word is also proud to bring to stage Paul Shoulberg's one-man play "Sick F**ck" which will be performed at the Micro Theater.

Also important to note is the strong commitment to local performers. Well over half of each year's festival is comprised of local artists: songwriters, poets, writers, actors, musicians, etc. WXW believes that the festival can only be made stronger by reaching into the community and demonstrating a commitment to nurturing local talent. The intersection of local and national talent provides a dynamic spark, which enriches the festival as a whole.

This year, students will have a chance to perform on the WXW stage with the debut of the Student Performance Contest. High school-aged students may submit video of themselves performing original works – whether spoken word, monologue, poetry, one-person play, song, or fiction – and the winner will perform at the festival’s closing show at the Colonial Theatre on August 20. Interested students should visit the WXW website (wordxwordfestival.com) for details.

With the exception of the Rooftop Gala, and the opening and closing shows, the entire festival is free. All Access/VIP passes which include admission to the Rooftop, and Opening and Closing shows, are available, and information can be found at www.wordxwordfestival.com

- Stand-alone tickets for Rooftop, and opening show can also be found on the website.
- Tickets to the Closing show at the Colonial may be purchased at the Colonial Box Office, or on their website.

Handmade souvenir passports will be available for purchase to document attendee travels throughout the festival. T shirts will also be available at venues during the festival.

Venues for this year’s festival include the Berkshire Museum, Barrington Stage’s Main Stage, The Colonial Theatre, the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts, New Stage Performing Arts Center, as well as Mission Bar, Shawn’s Barbershop, The Lantern, The Emporium, and the Micro Theatre.

Updates to schedules and venues can be found on the WXW website as well as on Facebook, and Twitter.

Major underwriting has been provided by Greylock Federal Credit Union. Additional sponsors include Berkshire Bank Foundation, City of Pittsfield, Mass Cultural Council, Interprint, Compuworks, Garnish Design, Harrison Design, yehle.net, Blue Q, Aldam Press, TSMIT, Inc, Curjo, Taylor and Marie-Elizabeth Mali, Running Center of the Berkshires, Scarafoni Financial Group, Eagleton School, Kutsher Sports Academy, Narragansett, Callahan Signs, Carol Shulze, and Mission.

The following have also contributed significantly to Word X Word: Colonial Theatre, Barrington Stage, Berkshire Museum, New Stage Performing Arts Center, Micro Theater, Ferrin Gallery, Mission Bar, The Lantern.

Contact:

Jim Benson
jwbenso11@gmail.com

Website: <http://wordxwordfestival.com>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/wordxwordfestival>