

News from Wapiti... Words for Writers

PRESS RELEASE

Canadian poet and novelist Patricia Keeney is pleased to announce the launch of not one but two new volumes in 2016-17 -- *Orpheus in Our World* (Neo-Poiesis), a "breathtaking" new volume of poetry and *One Man Dancing* (Inanna), a spectacular novel dealing with artistic risk and the madness of politics.

The poetry this time around (her eleventh volume) is a new and rare rendering into English of the early Orphic Hymns written at a time when a wide range of natural and psychic forces - from wind and sun to fear and desire - were just beginning to be anthropomorphized into what became the pantheon of Greek gods. In *Orpheus in Our World* they still appear in their earliest fascinating manifestations.

Bringing together slickly polished versions of the ancient hymns with a sly and ironic theatrical commentary by two characters identified simply as "He" and "She," *Orpheus* has received high praise from Greek literary critic and scholar Savas Patsalidis of Aristotle University who wrote that "Keeney's playful, multi-layered poetry preserves the fire of the original Orphic Hymns...recasts and diffuses its beauties with full-blown elegance. Her Orpheus comes back as a globe-gazer, a time-singer, a human-singer."

This is simply "a breathtaking work...a magnificent ride on the waves of a poet who's deeply inspired," according to well-known Canadian poet, philosopher and literary critic B.W. Powe.

One Man Dancing, on the other hand, Keeney's second novel, is rooted in a much more violent reality connected to theatre and politics during the reign of Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. The story of a young actor/dancer performing with one of Africa's most famous theatre companies, the novel follows his artistic triumphs in Africa, Europe and Latin America and his life and death escape involving the Ford Foundation, the Vatican and his arrival as a refugee in what should have been a safe and peaceful Canada. Filled with assassinations, assignations and encounters with the CIA, *One Man Dancing* traces the extraordinary and true story of one man's faith and fortitude against a breathless backdrop of politics and violence.

One Man Dancing, says Canadian writer Gary Geddes, is nothing less than "a paean to the heroic figures who struggled to resist the regime and retain their own dignity while Idi Amin was descending into barbarism." It "whispers rage in every line," according to African stage and screen star Debebe Eshetu, the former Artistic Director of the National Theatre of Ethiopia, and founding President of the Union of African Performing Artists. Deeply impressed by the book's artistry and political accuracy, Eshetu adds that "this Canadian woman has miraculously told only the Truth...A wonderful novel about art and artists."

Based in Ontario, Patricia Keeney was born in the UK, grew up in Ottawa and Montreal and now lives in a 160-year old log house in the tiny village of Sutton near Lake Simcoe. A long-time professor of Literature and Creative Writing at York University, she has read and lectured at universities and literary venues around the world and her work has been translated into French, Spanish, German, Hindi, Chinese and Bulgarian.

She is the winner of the Jean Paris Prize for poetry, the Nathan Cohen Award for drama criticism, and the Arc Award for literary criticism.

Keeney will be reading from both new volumes during 2017. Highlights include appearances at Toronto's Harbourfront in the spring and at the new George Ryga Festival in British Columbia in late summer. Other dates are now being added.

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