



NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier
BC Achievement Foundation

CANADA'S LARGEST NON-FICTION AWARD FINALISTS ANNOUNCED

VANCOUVER – The 2010 shortlist for Canada's largest non-fiction prize, the BC National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction, was announced today by Premier Gordon Campbell and Keith Mitchell, chair of the BC Achievement Foundation.

In the running for the \$40,000 prize are:

- Ian Brown for "The Boy in the Moon: A Father's Search for His Disabled Son"
- Karen Connelly for "Burmese Lessons: A Love Story"
- Eric Soblin for "The Cello Suites: J.S. Bach, Pablo Casals, and the Search for a Baroque Masterpiece"
- Kenneth Whyte for "The Uncrowned King: The Sensational Rise of William Randolph Hearst"

The shortlist was chosen by jury members Vicki Gabereau, award-winning television and radio interviewer; Philip Marchand, author, book columnist, and magazine writer, and Andreas Schroeder, author and Rogers Communications chair in UBC's Creative Writing Department.

"The list of nominees for this year's award demonstrates the diversity and talent of Canada's writers," said Premier Campbell, a director of the BC Achievement Foundation. "The shortlist embodies the versatility of Canadian non-fiction, spanning memoir, history, biography and reportage. These writers are making invaluable contributions to Canada's culture and to the strength of our knowledge economy."

The BC Award is the richest non-fiction book prize in the country and the non-fiction counterpart to the Giller Prize for fiction and the Griffin Poetry Prize.

Mitchell commented, "We thank the jury members for their thoughtful deliberations as they read the 149 submitted books, whittled the submissions to a list of 11 and now have chosen an excellent shortlist."

The winner of the BC National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction will be announced Friday, Jan. 15, 2010 at a special presentation ceremony in Vancouver.

The finalists are described in the following citations from the jury:

Ian Brown for The Boy in the Moon

A wrenching, heartbreaking but also remarkably hard-headed inquiry into the purpose and value of a disabled life – from the perspective of a father determined to understand, support and celebrate the struggles of his severely handicapped son. Ian Brown writes with a ruthless but eloquent honesty about a subject we too often sentimentalize, or, worse, sweep under the carpet.

Karen Connelly for Burmese Lessons

When Karen Connelly travelled to Burma in the mid-1990s, she planned merely to write a series of articles about an imprisoned dissident. Instead, she found herself writing a harrowing account of life under Burma's military dictatorship – the terror, the treachery, the brutality, but also the astonishingly resilient serenity, camaraderie and fatalism of the Burmese people. In the process, Connelly was forced to confront some of the most troubling questions any political writer must inevitably face: where is the line between being an observer and a participant, and what needs to be protected most: one's public writing or one's private life. An insightful, riveting book.

Eric Soblin for The Cello Suites

The Cello Suites – part biography, part music history and part mystery –brings together a composer, a cellist and a rock critic to explore, flesh out and celebrate the story of a remarkable musical composition. Both a detective story and a musical love affair, this is a book of extraordinary charm, insight and widespread literary appeal.

Kenneth Whyte for The Uncrowned King

Kenneth Whyte's life of the newspaper baron William Randolph Hearst demonstrates how biography can rise to the status of literary art – through lively prose, strong narrative and a clear-sighted, fresh appraisal of its material – while still remaining a scholarly and meticulously researched project. Like other notable biographies, Whyte's book tackles themes that transcend its individual subject. The author uses Hearst and his phenomenally successful newspapers as a case study in the functioning of news media in a democracy and in the responsibilities and limits of influence possessed by mass media.

The BC Award is an annual national prize established by the British Columbia Achievement Foundation, an independent foundation endowed by the Province of British Columbia in 2003 to celebrate excellence in the arts, humanities, enterprise and community service.

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For more information on the award and this year's finalists, please call 604-261-9777 or visit www.bcachievement.com. Downloadable images of book covers and authors' photos for this year's shortlist are also available at this URL.

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