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For Immediate Release

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**INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS & IDEAS
AND THE NEW HAVEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY
ANNOUNCE DETAILS OF
THE 2017 BIG READ ACTIVITIES**

**NEW HAVEN ONE OF 77 U.S. CITIES
PARTICIPATING IN INITIATIVE OF
THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ARTS MIDWEST**

The International Festival of Arts & Ideas and the New Haven Free Public Library today announced the events that will comprise the **2017 Big Read** in New Haven, an initiative of the **National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest** that endeavors to broaden our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book. The 2017 Big Read centers on ***Into The Beautiful North by Luis Alberto Urrea***, with dozens of related free events at partner organizations throughout the Greater New Haven area presented in partnership with New Haven Free Public Library, Junta for Progressive Action, New Haven Public Schools, Baobab Tree Studios, and Citywide Youth Coalition.

The New Haven edition of the 2017 Big Read launched on March 18 with "Un Dia De Pasaporte/A Passport Day," in which the U.S. Postal Service processed passport applications at Junta for Progressive and continues through the Festival 2017's conclusion on June 24.

"The International Festival of Arts & Ideas is honored to join forces with the New Haven Free Public Library system to represent New Haven as one of only 77 cities nationwide participating in this remarkable program which, like the Festival, aims to inspire conversation and discovery through remarkable works of art," said **Chad Herzog**, Interim Co-Executive Director of the International Festival, on behalf of his fellow Interim

Co-Executive Directors Liz Fisher and Tom Griggs. “We are deeply grateful to the National Endowment for the Arts and Arts Midwest for supporting this initiative, which will directly impact thousands of New Haven residents, and for the NEA's generous support of the International Festival for more than 20 years.”

“Reading to broaden and deepen our understanding of society is fundamental to the mission of the New Haven Free Public Library and Luis Alberto Urrea’s *Into the Beautiful North* is a beautifully crafted story exposing the complexities of cultural identity, family, and home,” City Librarian **Martha Brogan** stated. “With the Mayor’s drive to make New Haven ‘the City that Reads,’ this bilingual book selection strengthens partnerships and collaborations across the city, bringing an amazing array of creative programs, films, book club discussions and performances for adults, teens and young minds. The New Haven Free Public Library is thrilled to involve all of our neighborhood branches in making *Into the Beautiful North* accessible to everyone. So let’s get reading!”

“*Into the Beautiful North* presents many themes that are relevant to our youth: coping with loss, desire for family, struggles of immigration, and perceptions of gender-roles,” said **Simon Edgett**, High School ELA Lead Teacher, New Haven Public Schools. “Almost 200 books have been distributed in nine of our high schools to English Teachers and Library-Media Specialists who are interested in engaging students with the story in book-clubs, classroom activities, and independent reading projects. Once students have read the novel, they can complete an artistic response to any of the themes it presents and submit their original work to the Big Read 2017 Student Creative Challenge.”

MORE ABOUT INTO THE BEAUTIFUL NORTH

The U.S.-Mexico border is not just a line on a map; it is a dreamlike destination and departure point, surrounded by desperation and expectations. “No one writes more tragically or intimately about border culture than this son of a Mexican father and Anglo mother,” journalist Bill Moyers said of Luis Alberto Urrea, author of numerous works of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. In his third novel, *Into the Beautiful North*, Urrea transcends the “us against them” discourse of immigration and writes with compassion, complexity, and humor about the people and places caught up in the border wars. Urrea invites us to think of the border as more than a stark divide between nations: he reminds us that it is a place of convergence where meaningful conversations, and even love, between cultures begins.

BIG READ: ITINERARY OF FREE UPCOMING EVENTS

BIG READ: Film & Discussion: *The Other Side of Immigration*

New Haven Free Public Library Fair Haven Branch

April 29, 1:00pm

Join us for this 2010 documentary film directed by Roy Germano that explores why so many people leave the Mexican countryside to travel to work in the U.S., and what happens to the families and communities they leave behind. Discussion to follow.

The BIG READ Block Party @ Junta

Junta for Progressive Action

May 5, 5:00pm

Join us for the 2017 Big Read Kick-Off at Junta, in celebration of Latino culture—come eat, drink, dance, listen to music, and grab your free copy of “Into the Beautiful North” while supplies last!

Youth Challenge Story Gathering: Baobab Tree Studios- New Haven Story Project

Baobab Tree Studios

May 12, 5:00pm

Come under the Baobab tree and share your stories of im/migration. We invite participants and friends of the Big Read Youth Challenge to come celebrate the completion of their projects and to share a story. The New Haven Story Project will have stations set up to record your tales. **Light meal provided**

Dinner & Dialogue: Im/migration

New Haven Free Public Library Ives Branch

May 25, 5:30pm

Citywide Youth Coalition, Junta’s Youth in Action and Arts & Ideas Fellowship students join forces to lead a discussion around immigration, migration, and New Haven as a sanctuary city. Winners of the youth creative challenge will also be announced. Come and join the conversation!

BIG READ: Film & Discussion: *Beyond Borders: The Debate Over Human Migration*

New Haven Free Public Library Wilson Branch

May 30, 1:00pm

Join us for this 2007 documentary that explores issues of legal and illegal immigration traveling across the U.S. and beyond to give voices to those on the front-line of this issue. The film asks: Is migration a basic human right? Discussion to follow.

BIG READ: Film & Discussion: *The Magnificent Seven*

New Haven Free Public Library Ives Branch

June 1, 6:00pm

Join us for this 1960 American Western film modeled on Akira Kurosawa's 1954 Japanese film Seven Samurai. This very film is the one that inspired 19-year-old Nayeli, the main character of Into The Beautiful North by Luis Alberto Urrea. Discussion to follow.

New Haven Dances! The City's Largest Dance Lesson

New Haven Green

June 17 5:00pm

Shimmy your way down to the New Haven green for a dance party you won't forget. We Dance, one step, one love, one rhythm. The city dances to One Beat. Young, old, 2 left feet, dance enthusiasts to dance professionals are all welcome to join us for the Arts & Ideas Festival as we get the energy flowing through the streets of New Haven. Dance lessons and dance social will be on the menu of dancing to wait for that day. We look forward to having you participate in this amazing event.

Headline Concert: TROKER & FULASO

New Haven Green: KeyBank Stage

June 17, 2017, 6:00pm

TROKER

Six musicians from all over Mexico, with different influences but the same goal of creating mesmerizing rhythms and presenting unrepeatable live experiences, Troker's sound careens between the sublime and the dangerous.

Fulaso

Fulaso's FUNky LAtin SOul sound creates a soul-affirming, dance floor-burning party. Their music emanates from New York City and is rooted in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Colombia, mixing the hottest boogaloo classic arrangements with bumpin' neo-soul originals.

MORE ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS & IDEAS

The International Festival of Arts & Ideas is a year-round organization that culminates with an annual celebration of performing arts, lectures, and conversations each June in New Haven, CT. The 2017 Festival will take place June 3–24. The Festival convenes leading artists, thought leaders, and innovators from around the world for fifteen days of dynamic public programs to engage, entertain, and inspire a diversity of communities. More than 80% of Festival programs are free to the public, including events that feature some of the most influential jazz, classical, dance, and theater artists of our time.

The Festival takes place in venues and open spaces in downtown New Haven, in the heart of the northeast corridor, two and a half hours south of Boston and ninety minutes north of New York City.

The Festival's programs have an impact throughout the year and include additional performances, educational opportunities, and the annual Visionary Leadership Award. The Festival was established in 1996, by Anne Calabresi, Jean M. Handley, and Roslyn Meyer. They envisioned an annual celebration in New Haven—a city steeped in a rich array of cultural and educational traditions—distinguished from other arts festivals by its fusion of the arts with events centered on sharing ideas.

The Festival is presented with major support from the Connecticut Office of the Arts, Yale University, KeyBank, Comcast/NBC Connecticut, The City of New Haven, The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

MORE ABOUT THE NEW HAVEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The New Haven Free Public Library welcomes more than 550,000 library patrons through its doors each year. The library system includes the Ives Memorial Library on the historic New Haven Green, 24/7 online services, the Readmobile bringing books to early childhood learning centers, and four neighborhood libraries: Fair Haven, Mitchell, Wilson and Stetson.

The New Haven Free Public Library's mission is to ensure all New Haven's citizens have full and unlimited access to information and knowledge so that they may meet the needs of daily living, have opportunities for self-education, and participate successfully in self-government.

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