



Press release

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Midnight's Children wins the Best of the Booker

- **Salman Rushdie tops public poll 15 years after winning the *Booker of Bookers***

www.themanbookerprize.com

27 years after its initial publication *Midnight's Children* is in the news again as it is today (10th July 2008) announced as the winner of the Best of the Booker.

The only time that a celebratory award has previously been created for 'the Booker' was in 1993 – the 25th anniversary - when Salman Rushdie also won the *Booker of Bookers* with *Midnight's Children*.

When voting closed at midday on the 8th July 7801 people had voted (via online and SMS) for the six shortlisted Best of the Booker prize titles with 36% voting for *Midnight's Children*. Votes came in from all around the world with 37% of online votes coming from the UK followed closely by 27% of online voters from North America. At least half of the voters were under 35 with the largest age group ranging between 25-34years, a reflection of the ongoing interest in quality fiction amongst readers of all ages.

The Best of the Booker shortlist was selected by a panel of judges – the biographer, novelist and critic Victoria Glendinning, (Chair); writer and broadcaster Mariella Frostrup, and John Mullan, Professor of English at University College, London.

Victoria Glendinning comments:

"The readers have spoken - in their thousands. And we do believe that they have made the right choice."

Salman Rushdie, in America on tour with his latest novel, *The Enchantress of Florence*, was unable to attend the event and instead sent his thanks via a pre-recorded message. His sons, Zafar and Milan, were in attendance at the award ceremony at the South Bank Centre to receive the custom made trophy.

Salman Rushdie comments:

"Marvellous news! I'm absolutely delighted and would like to thank all those readers around the world who voted for *Midnight's Children*."

Other celebrations to mark the anniversary include an exhibition **in the autumn** at the **V&A** telling the visual story of the prize over its 40 years. **The British Council** is also working towards the creation of an online collection of contemporary British literature. The Council is in negotiation with publishers to include former winners of the Booker Prize and Man Booker Prize as e-books for a pilot project.

For further information on all the shortlisted titles and to watch the winner's speech please go to www.themanbookerprize.com

For further press information contact:

Eleanor Hutchins / Jane Acton

eleanor/jane@colmangetty.co.uk

020 7631 2666/07970 771 375

Notes to editors

- The shortlist for the Best of the Booker Prize was as follows:

Pat Barker's *The Ghost Road* (1995, Viking; paperback Penguin)

Peter Carey's *Oscar and Lucinda* (1988, Faber & Faber; paperback Faber)

JM Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999, Secker & Warburg; paperback Vintage)

Nadine Gordimer's *The Conservationist* (1974, Cape; paperback Bloomsbury)

JG Farrell's *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1973, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, paperback Phoenix)

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981, Cape; paperback Vintage)

- The initial judges for the Best of the Booker Prize are available for interview via Colman Getty
- The Booker Prize for Fiction was first awarded in 1969, and Man Group plc was announced as the sponsor of the prize in April 2002, with a five year extension agreed in 2006.
- For details of the shortlisted books and a full history of the prize including all previous winners, shortlisted authors and judges visit the website: www.themanbookerprize.com. The site features the rules of entry, background information and breaking news and is the quickest way for the prize's worldwide audience to access information.

The site, which incorporates a new look for the 40th anniversary, is rapidly becoming a key reference for contemporary fiction. It includes *Perspective*, an online magazine, featuring Q&A interviews, written pieces and a Literary Calendar.

- 41 authors have won the prize since it launched in 1969 because in 1974 and 1992 it was shared between two winners. From 1993 onwards the rules stipulated that there could only be one winner each year.

- The Advisory Committee, which advises on any changes to the rules and on the selection of the judges, represents all sides of the book world. Its members are: Ion Trewin (Administrator, Man Booker Prizes); Richard Cable, publisher; Mark Chilton, Company Secretary, Booker Ltd; Peter Clarke, Chief Executive, Man Group plc; Jonathan Douglas, Director of the National Literacy Trust; Victoria Glendinning, writer; Basil Comely, BBC TV; Derek Johns, literary agent; Gerry Johnson, Managing Director, Waterstone's; Nigel Newton, publisher; Fiammetta Rocco, literary editor, *The Economist* (Man Booker International Prize administrator); Eve Smith (Company Secretary, the Booker Prize Foundation); Robert Topping, Topping & Company Booksellers and Erica Wagner, literary editor, *The Times*
- The Booker Prize Foundation is a registered charity (no 1090049) which, since 2002, has been responsible for the award of the prize. The trustees of the Booker Prize Foundation are former Chairman of Booker plc, Jonathan Taylor CBE (Chair); Lord Baker of Dorking CH; former Man Booker Prize administrator, Martyn Goff CBE; playwright and President of the Royal Literary Fund, Ronald Harwood CBE; former Chair of the British Council, Baroness Kennedy QC; writer, Baroness Neuberger DBE; MEP Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne; and former Finance Director of Rentokil plc, Christopher Pearce
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