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Fall Ushers in the 47th Annual National Storytelling Festival

(Jonesborough, Tenn.) – Tickets are on sale now for the nation’s premier storytelling event, the National Storytelling Festival, held **October 4-6**. In the age of fast-moving technology, it seems unlikely that thousands of audience members could spend an entire weekend spellbound by storytellers, but that's exactly what happens in Tennessee’s oldest town during the first full weekend of October. A beloved tradition since 1973, the three-day celebration of the world’s oldest art form is expected to draw more than 11,000 fans from across the nation.

The Festival’s core programming consists of meticulously produced storytelling shows held beneath big-top tents scattered across downtown Jonesborough. Those performances will run from **10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday**, and **10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Sunday**. The diverse lineup includes Japanese-American duo Eth-Noh-Tec, who produce an exciting blend of storytelling and kinetic theater; Brazilian born dynamo Antonio Rocha; Oklahoma Choctaw Storyteller Tim Tingle; and Scottish/Kenyan storyteller Mara Menzies, internationally known for enthraling audiences around the world with stories from her rich dual heritage.

This year’s featured tellers also include perennial southern favorites such as Donald Davis, Minton Sparks, and Bil Lepp. By showcasing oral traditions from the South and all over the world, the Festival inspires unexpected connections and promotes cultural understanding.

To complement the Festival’s signature storytelling concerts, many of the special events scheduled throughout the weekend are included in the price of the ticket, including Exchange Place, a concert focusing on new talent; the Swappin’ Ground, where anyone can tell a story; and a Story Slam competition that offers cash prizes.



Separately ticketed events include two pre-Festival concerts also held on the Festival grounds. Celebrated storyteller Donald Davis will kick off the Festival on Wednesday, October 2, with *Women Who Raised Me, Chapter One*. On Thursday, October 3, nationally-known humorist Jeanne Robertson will take the stage with *Laugh Lines*. Both shows begin at 7:30 p.m., and tickets can be reserved in advance or purchased on site for as long as available.

Visitors can also expect two nights of the beloved Ghost Stories event, which are told in the open autumn air beneath the stars. On Friday night, the Midnight Cabaret will feature time traveler Jerron “Blind Boy” Paxton, known for transporting audiences back to the 1920s and making them wish they could stay there for good. His musical talent, coupled with his humor and storytelling, make for a uniquely exciting evening.

Three workshops led by nationally-known artists will also be held on Thursday, October 3, in Mary B. Martin Storytelling Hall: *Speaking without Preaching* with Sue O’Halloran; *Getting to Grief: Storytelling in Bereavement* with Regi Carpenter; and *Intro to Journalistic Performance*, with award winning writer, actor, and former Fulbright scholar, Dan Hoyle.

All tickets for the National Storytelling Festival, including separate ticketed events, can be purchased online at www.storytellingcenter.net, at the International Storytelling Center (ISC) in downtown Jonesborough, or on the Festival grounds. The National Storytelling Festival is sponsored in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Tennessee Arts Commission, Niswonger Foundation, BathFitter, Corner Cup, and Dollywood’s DreamMore Resort and Spa. For more information or to make reservations, call ISC at (800) 952-8392, ext. 221.

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