

## SC-CC 17th Annual Conference: *Tides and Tales*

### *Tales at Eventide Concert Storytellers Bios*

#### Anita Best



Anita Best has spent a lifetime exploring, cataloguing and celebrating the rural Newfoundland lifestyle and culture. In the process she has become one of the province's most prominent traditional singers and storytellers.

Born on Merasheen Island in Placentia Bay (since abandoned under the resettlement program), Best has worked as an educator, archivist, folklorist, broadcaster and singer. A particular interest in oral history - songs

and stories passed down through generations - led to her performing career. She has toured extensively as a storyteller and singer, made numerous television and radio appearances and added her voice to several Newfoundland recordings. She is best known for two albums: *The Colour Of Amber*, collaboration with Pamela Morgan, was released in 1993. *Crosshanded*, a collection of twelve songs for solo voice, followed a few years later. In these recordings and in her performances, Best tends to forego the standard Newfoundland repertoire in favour of the lesser known songs and stories collected from around the province.

Anita Best is also the co-author of the folk song collection *Come And I Will Sing You*. She has worked with numerous folk arts councils and heritage groups, organizing concerts and other folklore events. She has received several awards and honours for her contributions to heritage preservation and the cultural life of the province.

#### Richard Van Camp



Mark Mushet Photography

Richard Van Camp is a proud member of the [Dogrib \(Tlicho\)](#) Nation from Fort Smith, NWT, Canada. A graduate of the En'owkin International School of Writing, the University of Victoria's Creative Writing BFA Program, and the Master's Degree in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia, Richard currently teaches Creative Writing with an Aboriginal Focus at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, B.C. Richard is the author of two children's books with the [Cree](#) artist, George Littlechild, *A Man Called Raven* and *What's the Most Beautiful Thing You Know About Horses?*, with Children's Book Press, a

novel, *The Lesser Blessed*, and a collection of his finest short stories, *Angel Wing Splash Pattern* with Kegedonce Press and a baby book titled *Welcome Song for Baby: A Lullaby for Newborns* with Orca Books, which will be given to every newborn baby in British

Columbia in 2008 as part of the Books for Babies initiative in BC. His new novel, *Blessing Wendy*, will be out with Orca Books in 2009. Richard was recently Writer in Residence at the University College of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford, BC, for the Winter, 2007, semester. He was also Writer in Residence for CBC Radio's North by Northwest Program for 2006 and 2007. He has performed at both the *Winnipeg International Authors' Festival* as well as the *Vancouver International Writers and Readers Festival*, the *Vancouver Storytelling Festival*, the *Vancouver Comedy Festival*, the *Vancouver Children's Festival*; he's been a *Literary Mentor* at the *British Columbia Festival of the Arts* (1998) and performed at the *2nd Annual Moose Jaw Festival of Words*, the *Aboriginal Voices Festival*, the *Baltic International Canadian Studies Conference* in Riga, Latvia, and the *Nordic Association for Canadian Studies' 2003 Conference* in Rovaniemi, Finland as well as the two *Honouring Words Literary Festivals* across Canada (2002) and throughout Australia (2003).

His new novel, **Blessing Wendy**, will be published in the Fall of 2009 with Orca Book Publishers. This novel is about how five young Dogrib men grieve and create ceremonies for a cousin who is molested by the high school principal in the fictional town of Fort Simmer, NWT.

He was recently awarded "Wordcraft Storyteller of the Year" in 2006-2007 for "the greatest storytelling in Canada and the US."

### Jean-Pierre Makosso



An internationally renowned actor, storyteller and dancer, Jean-Pierre Makosso is a descendant from a long line of African storytellers. He was born in Pointe Noire, Congo Brazzaville in Central Africa. Jean Pierre has performed at more than 1,000 schools worldwide. He is currently working on his biography, conducting workshops, and promoting his own play. His recent works include *Uncontrollable Laughter* and *Mbassu*, co-written with John Conway; and *Anansi the Spider*.

His play *African Voices* showed at Heritage Playhouse, Gibsons BC in February for Black History Month. Jean-Pierre will be telling stories in his native language: French.

## Nan Gregory

Nan Gregory has been a professional storyteller since 1984, telling traditional stories and stories from history to audiences of all ages. She grew up in Victoria, BC, and though she has lived in Vancouver for more than half her life now, she still considers the rocky bluffs and twisted oaks and arbutus of Vancouver Island to be her true home. In the summer, she and her husband take long kayak journeys together along the coast of BC.



Nan has represented Canada at storytelling festivals in Japan and New Zealand. She has written two personal pieces which were performed nationally. She is also an award-winning writer of picture books for children, having received, among others, the Mr. Christie's Book Prize for *How Smudge Came*, Red Deer Press 1995, and the Canadian Library Association Book of the Year Award for *Wild Girl and Gran*, Red Deer Press, 2000.

## Dan Yashinsky



Dan Yashinsky is the founder of the Toronto Festival of Storytelling. He is the author of *Suddenly They Heard Footsteps - Storytelling for the Twenty-first Century* (2007 Anne Izard Storytellers' Choice Award). He has performed and taught at festivals in Singapore, Sweden, Belgium, Ireland, Israel, Wales, England, Brazil, Holland, the U.S., and throughout Canada. He created the Telling Bee curriculum project, which has been used in more than 40 schools. In 1999 he received the Jane Jacobs Prize for his work with storytelling in the community. He is currently touring, with musician Brian Katz, a "canta storia" called *Talking You In* - a modern Scheherazade story about a father telling stories to his son in the neo-natal intensive care unit. For more information please drop by [www.tellery.com](http://www.tellery.com).