



MEDIA ALERT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MAYOR ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA,
THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL,
AND
LOS ANGELES POET LAUREATE, ELOISE KLEIN HEALY
ANNOUNCE APRIL 2013 AS
LITERACY MONTH
CELEBRATING THE *BIG READ PROGRAM IN LA*

Los Angeles – The City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) marks its fifth year of producing the 2013 *Big Read Program in LA* with Nobel Laureate **Naguib Mahfouz’s novel, *The Thief and The Dogs***. As part of this arts education initiative, April 2013 will be dedicated as: ***Literacy Month ~ Celebrating the Big Read Program in Los Angeles*** by Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa, the Los Angeles City Council, and Los Angeles Poet Laureate, Eloise Klein Healy, during a proclamation ceremony at Los Angeles City Hall in the City Council Chambers, on April 2, 2013, at 10:00 a.m.

The ***2013 Big Read Program in LA*** will be officially introduced along with the featured book, ***The Thief and The Dogs***, a psychological thriller and morality tale set in Cairo, Egypt that follows a thief’s quest for revenge. Students, schools, cultural and community partners, participating organizations, and the Consulate of Egypt in Los Angeles, will be recognized by the Mayor, the City Council, and other elected officials at City Hall.

The Big Read is an initiative of the **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)** designed to restore reading to the center of American culture. The NEA presents **The Big Read** in partnership with the **Institute of Museum and Library Services** and in partnership with **Arts Midwest**. **The Big Read** brings together partners across the county to encourage reading for pleasure and enlightenment.

Since the inception of **The Big Read** in 2007/08, the NEA has awarded grants to the **Department of Cultural Affairs** each year to produce the ***Big Read Program in LA***. The program consists of a series of activities through May and is presented by DCA in conjunction with several community and cultural organizations that include: media partner, ABC7; the Consulate of Egypt in



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Los Angeles; the Culinary Historians of Southern California; the Egyptian American Organization, the Egyptian Theatre; the Levantine Cultural Center; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Los Angeles Public Library; the Los Angeles Unified School District; the Museum of the San Fernando Valley; the Music Center; the Oasis Actor's Studio; the Partnership for Los Angeles Schools; Piccolo's Books; the Sony Pictures Media Arts Program; and many more.

Nearly 3,000 students from local high schools in culturally diverse areas of Los Angeles will join community members in reading *The Thief and The Dogs*, with activities offered for all ages and interests. The public is invited to participate in the 2013 *Big Read Program in LA* and enjoy the many activities offered by the community partners, including, a food lecture and tasting, art exhibitions, live performances, art exhibitions, live performances, film screenings, discussion panels, a book festival, visits to cultural landmarks, and a Middle Eastern marketplace.

For a list of events for DCA's 2013 *Big Read Program in LA*, please visit:

http://www.culturela.org/Events/2013/Big_Read_Program_in_LA.pdf

All local programs are free unless otherwise indicated. Please call **213.202.5567** for additional information.

To learn more about **The Big Read** and other NEA sponsored initiatives around the country, please visit:

neabigread.org

About the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)

The **Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)** generates and supports high quality arts and cultural experiences for Los Angeles' 4 million residents and 26 million annual visitors. DCA advances the social and economic impact of the arts and ensures access to diverse and enriching cultural activities through: grant making, marketing, public art, community arts programming, arts education, and building partnerships with artists and arts and cultural organizations in neighborhoods throughout the City of Los Angeles.

DCA's operating budget and managed portfolio totals \$39.8 million in fiscal year 2012/13. It consists of: \$11 million in funds from the Public Works Improvements Arts Program (PWIAP); \$10.8 million in City related and indirect cost allocations; \$6.7 million from the Private Arts Development Fee Program (ADF); \$9.2 million in Transient Occupancy Tax funds; and over \$2.1 million in private and public funds raised from foundation, corporate, government, and individual donors.



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DCA significantly supports artists and cultural projects through its Public Art Division by administering a portfolio totaling \$17.7 million in PWIAP and ADF funds in FY12/13. DCA's Marketing and Development Division has raised over \$20 million since FY07/08 to re-grant to LA-based artists and arts and cultural organizations for special grant initiatives and to support DCA's special programming and facilities.

DCA also grants approximately \$2.2 million annually to over 280 artists and nonprofit arts and cultural organizations through its long-established Grants Administration Division.

DCA provides arts and cultural programming through its Community Arts Division, managing numerous neighborhood arts and cultural centers, theaters, historic sites, and educational initiatives. DCA's Marketing and Development Division also markets the City's arts and cultural events through development and collaboration with strategic partners, design and production of creative catalogs, publications, and promotional materials, and management of the culturela.org website visited by over 3 million people annually.

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