

10/27/04 Welsh Development Agency - New \$100,000 Dylan Thomas literary prize for young writers

Wales International Center, October 27, 2004: Today would have been Dylan Thomas's 90th birthday. In honor of the Welsh poet, a new international literary prize for writers under 30 years of age was launched simultaneously in the Algonquin, New York and in Swansea, Wales – Dylan's birthplace. The Dylan Thomas Prize of \$100,000 will be awarded biennially to the most outstanding published writer in English, aged under 30 at the launch date. It will be open to writers worldwide for any discipline in which Dylan himself wrote including poetry, the novel, the play and the short story. The first prize will be awarded on October 27, 2006 during Dylan Thomas Festival Week and the winner will also embark on a creative writing residency at the University of Wales, Swansea, and at the University of Texas, Austin.

The Welsh actress, Catherine Zeta Jones – also from Swansea - is the International Ambassador for the Prize. She welcomed guests at both launches in a videotape recorded recently whilst on film location in Mexico. "I hope that, as the first International Ambassador for the Dylan Thomas Prize, I can help encourage the participation of young writers from all over the world. This is a fantastic initiative and one which I am proud to be part of" she said.

Dave Slivka, a close friend of Dylan's and the sculptor who made Dylan's death mask, was present at the New York launch. He was celebrating his 90th birthday, having been born on the same day as the poet.

The prize will be judged by a high profile jury including Simon Kelner, the editor of the British newspaper The Independent ; the novelists Ben Marcus and Paul Watkins; and Professor Kurt Heinzelman of the University of Texas that hosts the largest collection of Dylan's work.

The Dylan Thomas Prize Ltd. is a not-for-profit organisation based in Swansea and funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, Swansea City Council and other public and private bodies.

The competition entry form can be found on the Dylan Thomas Prize website www.dylanthomasprize.com

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