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Ragdale



**Media: For more information, please contact:
Laura Hegwer
Ragdale Communications Consultant
(847) 736-3262
laurahegwer@comcast.net**

LATINO, LATINA POETS SHARE WORK AT RAGDALE ON OCTOBER 19

Ragdale's first collaborative residency for Latino, Latina poets
culminates in public reading

LAKE FOREST, IL – OCTOBER 8, 2010 – On October 19, Ragdale will host “Ocho Poetas,” a public event featuring readings by eight of the country’s most noted contemporary Latino and Latina poets.

The event marks the first-ever collaborative residency for Latino and Latina poets at Ragdale, the fourth-largest artists’ community in the United States. The residency is funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and is also a collaboration with Letras Latinas, the literary program of the Institute for Latino Studies (ILS) at the University of Notre Dame.

“We’re delighted to host this collaborative residency program and serve as a vital resource for artists in an ever-changing, multicultural society,” says Susan Page Tillett, Executive Director of Ragdale. “By bringing poets of similar backgrounds together so they can work side-by-side, we hope that the supportive environment at Ragdale will inspire them to greater creativity, individually and collectively.”

In mid-October, eight Latino and Latina poets will live and work in community at Ragdale for one week. As with all residencies, the invited group of poets will be free to work on their own projects. In addition, the poets will discuss and explore the challenges they face as writers who are also active as literary editors.

“We’re looking forward to this unique week-long opportunity to build community,” says Francisco Aragón who, along with Maria Melendez, is co-facilitating the residency. He is Director of Letras Latinas and a Ragdale alumnus. “But we’re also here to learn about each others’ editing projects and explore ways we can better support one another after we leave Ragdale, as well as reach out to other poet/editors in our community. My hope is that we expand this circle.”

In addition to the public reading, “Ocho Poetas” will also serve as a platform to announce a new national Latino poetry initiative that involves Ragdale and Letras Latinas as partners, as well as Red Hen Press in Pasadena, CA. The reading and announcement will take place on Tuesday, October 19, at 7 pm at Ragdale, located at 1260 N. Green Bay Road in Lake Forest. Seats are limited. To reserve a space, please RSVP to Melissa Ernst at Ragdale, at 847.234.1063, ext. 201.

The featured poet/editors

Francisco Aragón (*Latino Poetry Review* / Momotombo Press)

Francisco Aragón is the author of *Puerta del Sol* and *Glow of Our Sweat*. He edited *The Wind Shifts: New Latino Poetry*. His poems and translations have appeared in a range of anthologies and journals, including *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Chelsea*, *Jacket*, *Mandorla*, and *Poetry Daily*. He serves on the board of Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP). Aragón is also the editor of *Canto Cosas*, a book series from Bilingual Press for Latino and Latina poets. He directs Letras Latinas, the literary program of the Institute for Latino Studies (ILS) at the University of Notre Dame. Visit: <http://franciscoaragon.net>.

David Dominguez (*The Packinghouse Review*)

David Dominguez’s first book of poetry, *Work Done Right*, was published by the University of Arizona Press. His second collection of poetry, *The Ghost of César Chávez*, was published by C&R Press. Dominguez’s poems have appeared in *The Bloomsbury Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Poet Lore*, and *The Southern Review*. His work has been anthologized in *Bear Flag Republic: Prose Poems and Poetics from California*, *Camino del Sol: Fifteen Years of Latina and Latino Writing*, *The Wind Shifts: New Latino Poetry*, among others. He teaches full-time at Reedley College and is the co-founder and poetry/nonfiction editor of *The Packinghouse Review*.

Carmen Giménez Smith (Noemi Press, *Puerto del Sol*)

Carmen Giménez Smith is an assistant professor of creative writing at New Mexico State University, and publisher for Noemi Press as well as editor-in-chief of *Puerto del Sol*. Her work has most recently appeared in *jubilat*, *Ploughshares*, and *Colorado Review* and is forthcoming in *A Public Space*, *Denver Quarterly*, and *New American Writing*. Her collection of poetry, *Odalisque in Pieces*, was published by the University of Arizona Press in 2009. A memoir called *Bring Down the Little Birds* was published by University of Arizona Press in 2010.

Roberto Harrison (*Bronze Skull Press*, *Crayon*)

Roberto Harrison is Panamanian-American. His work has appeared in *Talisman*, *Jacket*, *New American Writing*, *Chicago Review*, *Bombay Gin*, and *Mandorla*, among many other places. He edited *Crayon* with Andrew Levy and now publishes Bronze Skull Press chapbooks and hosts the Enemy Rumor reading series. He is the author of two full-length collections, *Os* (subpress) and *Counter Daemons* (Litmus) and of a half dozen or so chapbooks. He lives in Milwaukee where he works as a systems librarian.

Raina J. León (*Acentos Literary Review*)

Raina J. León, a Cave Canem fellow and member of the Carolina African-American Writers Collective, has been published in *The Cherry Blossom Review*, *Natural Bridge*, *OCHO*, *Poem.Memoir.Story*, *Black Arts Quarterly*, *Womb*, *Boxcar Poetry Review*, *Salt Hill Journal*, *Xavier Review*, *MiPoesias*, *Torch: Poetry, Prose and Short Stories by African American Women*, *Poetic Voices without Borders*, *Gathering Ground: A Reader Celebrating Cave Canem's First Decade*, *Growing Up Girl: An Anthology of Voices from Marginalized Spaces*, *AntiMuse*, *Farmhouse Magazine*, *Furnace Review*, *Constellation Magazine*, and *Tiger's Eye Journal* among others, with forthcoming work in *African American Review*. Her first collection of poetry, *Canticle of Idols*, was published in 2008.

J. Michael Martínez (Breach Press)

Poet, essayist, and librettist, J. Michael Martínez's writings have appeared in *Puerto Del Sol*, *New American Writing*, on NPR, and *Mandorla*. Recent work can be found in *Octopus*, *Phoebe*, *Quarterly West*, and other journals. Recipient of the 2006 Five Fingers Review Poetry Prize, he has received residencies from the Ragdale Foundation, Canto Mundo, and the Vermont Studio Center. His libretto for the opera "The Autumn Orchard" premiered this past summer at CU's New Opera Workshop. His collection *Heredities* was selected by Juan Felipe Herrera for the Academy of American Poets' Walt Whitman Award. He also likes chocolate. Dark. Typically with strawberries. He can be found at www.jmichaelmartinez.org.

Maria Melendez (*Pilgrimage* / Momotombo Press)

Maria Melendez publishes *Pilgrimage* in Pueblo, Colorado, a literary magazine serving a far-flung community of writers, artists, naturalists, contemplatives, activists, seekers, and other adventurers in and beyond the Greater Southwest (www.pilgrimagepress.org). University of Arizona Press has published two of her poetry collections: *How Long She'll Last in This World* (2006) and *Flexible Bones* (2010). She serves as Contributing Editor for *Latino Poetry Review* and Acquisitions Editor for Momotombo Press, a chapbook publisher featuring prose and poetry by emerging Latino writers.

elena minor (*Palabra*)

elena minor is founding editor of *PALABRA*, *A Magazine of Chicano & Latino Literary Art*. Her work has been published in *RHINO*, *Mandorla*, *Hot Metal Bridge*, *OCHO*, *Quercus Review*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Diner*, *City Works*, *Poetry Midwest*, *26*, *Segue*, and *BorderSenses*, among others. A seasoned arts administrator, she teaches creative writing to high school students. She is also a past first prize recipient of the Chicano/Latino Literary Prize in drama. She earned her MFA at Antioch University Los Angeles.

About Ragdale

The Ragdale Foundation is an artists' community that enriches the creative spirit, fosters artistic freedom, and infuses the artistic process with a powerful energy burst – the catalyst for creativity. Built in 1897, Ragdale is located on the grounds of Arts and Crafts architect Howard Van Doren Shaw's summer home in Lake Forest, IL. Today the historic, timeless, and tranquil environment provides a sanctuary for artists-in-residence through its Foundation. For more information about Ragdale, please contact

847.234.1063. Ragdale is located at 1260 N. Green Bay Road, Lake Forest, Illinois 60045.

About Letras Latinas

Letras Latinas seeks to enhance the visibility, appreciation, and study of Latino literature both on and off the campus of the University of Notre Dame. Of particular interest are projects that identify and support emerging Latino and Latina writers. Letras Latinas actively seeks collaboration with individuals and organization in order to more effectively carry out its mission. To learn more about Letras Latinas, please visit: <http://letraslatinas.net>.

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