

Press release

**György Dragomán wins
the Jan Michalski Prize for Literature 2011
for his novel *The White King***

Lausanne, 16 November 2011 – The jury has awarded the Jan Michalski Prize for Literature 2011 to György Dragomán for *The White King*, a fascinating and deeply troubling novel which describes the harsh reality of everyday life under a dictatorial regime, as seen through the eyes of a young child.

By five votes out of six, the international jury of the Jan Michalski Prize for Literature selected György Dragomán for *The White King* from among the seven authors on the short list for the 2011 Prize.

Born in 1973 in Transylvania in the Hungarian minority, **György Dragomán** has lived in Budapest since 1988. His mother tongue is Hungarian. With *The White King*, he has created an innovative masterpiece that opens new horizons for literature from Eastern Europe.

From the naïve viewpoint of an eleven-year old boy, György Dragomán describes the sinister atmosphere of a country under the Communist yoke, shortly after the Chernobyl catastrophe. In language that is both precise and breathless, he portrays the insidious effects, the submission and the traumatic violence that permeate a profoundly degraded society.

The President of the Jury, Vera Michalski-Hoffmann, presented to György Dragomán the prize of 50,000 Swiss francs and a work of art, *Paysage avec remparts*, created by the painter Olivier O. Olivier in 2001. The Jan Michalski Foundation thus wishes to pay tribute to this artist and friend, who died last April.

The Jury also distinguished two other authors on the short list. The Icelandic novelist, poet and librettist **Sjón**, born in 1962, for *The Blue Fox*. Already translated into several languages, the novel received the highest distinction in the Nordic countries in 2005, when it was awarded the Nordic Council Literature Prize. The second finalist was **Miguel Syjuco**, for his first novel, *Ilustrado*, written in English. Born in 1976 in Manila in the Philippines into a family of politicians, he has already received several literary prizes (the Palanca Awards, the Man Asian Literary Prize). *Ilustrado* has been translated into several languages.

The original feature of the Jan Michalski Prize lies in its multicultural nature. It is designed to contribute to the international recognition of writers. The **international jury** is composed of Vera Michalski-Hoffmann, President, Włodzimierz Bolecki, Nuruddin Farah, Georges Nivat, Ilija Trojanow and Fabienne Verdier. As from January 2012, it will be supplemented by the nomination of Isabel Hilton and Yannick Haenel. Independent and unpaid, the members of the jury propose works in their various languages, and pledge to defend them. Short-listed works are translated, if necessary, into a language that is understood by all the jury members. Only books that are published and presented by the members of the jury are considered for the Jan Michalski Prize for Literature.

Schedule for the Jan Michalski Prize for Literature 2012 :

28 February 2012	Closing date for the presentation of works by the members of the jury
November 2012	Last discussion by the jury and nomination of the winner - Official ceremony for the award of the Jan Michalski Prize for Literature 2012

The philanthropic action of the Jan Michalski Foundation for Writing and Literature

The Jan Michalski Foundation for Writing and Literature was established in 2004 to commemorate Jan Michalski and perpetuate his action for the promotion of literary creation. Its calling is to promote writing through its multiple support activities, including the provision of financial assistance, the organization of literary events and the hosting of writers in residence, so as to offer them the conditions for the creation of their works. The Jan Michalski Prize for Literature extends the scope of the Foundation's action.

Additional information and contacts:

Fondation Jan Michalski pour l'Écriture et la Littérature

Ann Bandle - Director

En Bois Désert – 1147 Montricher

Tel. +41 21 864 01 02

Tel. +41 79 286 76 12

ann.bandle@fondation-janmichalski.ch

www.fondation-janmichalski.ch