

Los Angeles Times

Festival of Books: Gladwell, Choi and Oates close out fest's 20th year

By the time the 20th *Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books wound down Sunday, thousands of Angelenos had listened to debates on social justice and racial bias, short stories versus novels, and heard from authors like Malcolm Gladwell and Joyce Carol Oates as well as restaurateur Roy Choi.

The crowds descended on USC over the weekend to celebrate the power of books and to experience conversations, discussions, performances, book-signings and cooking demonstrations.

British rocker Billy Idol was one of the biggest draws to the *L.A. Times* Stage on Saturday. Though he was there to discuss his memoir "Dancing With Myself" (2014), Idol performed his 1980s-era hit "Rebel Yell," and people rushed the stage.

On Sunday, Malcolm Gladwell filled Bovard Auditorium and talked about a wide range of topics, including writing. "Writing is a constant lesson in empathy and listening ... it forces you to do those, and I think of those as the two hardest



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things that any human being has to do," Gladwell said.

At other events, L.A. Galaxy player Robbie Rogers talked about overcoming his fears about telling the world he was gay in "Coming Out." Josh Kun discussed his upcoming history of Los Angeles through the lens of its restaurant menus.

And actor Jason Segel talked not about the TV show "How I Met Your Mother" but about his love of his book and script for "Nightmares!"

Author Joyce Carol Oates talked about her latest novel, "The Sacrifice," and advised writers to let their characters and scenes

fully develop before they start writing.

Elsewhere, author Jacqueline Woodson captivated an audience as she discussed her writing and style in the poetry-driven "Brown Girl Dreaming."

"Memory doesn't come as a straight narrative," she said. "It comes in small moments with all this white space."

Countless authors and performers started their event by thanking folks who gathered to support the festival in its 20th year. Their sentiments were echoed by 13-year-old Miriam Silva who was at the festival Saturday for the second year with her classmates.

"When I come here, I'm just amazed because there's different people here and it's fun," Miriam said. "People usually think of books as boring ... but when I come here I just want to read more."

Times reporters Taylor Goldenstein, Saba Hamedy, Brittny Mejia and Soumya Karlamangla contributed to this report.



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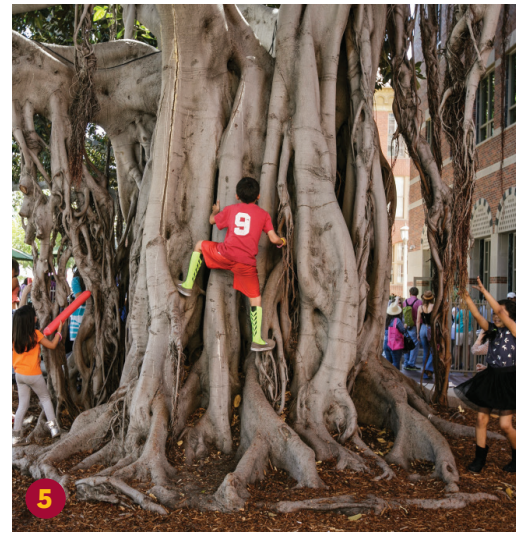
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1. This year's two-day event drew 157,000 people.

2. USC President C. L. Max Nikias and *Los Angeles Times* publisher Austin Beutner welcome guests to the festival—now in its 20th year. USC has hosted it for the last five years.

3. Cartoon contest participants pose with their winning entries.

Photos by Gus Ruelas



4. Anastasia Shim-Hernandez adds to a sponge sculpture by artist Olga Lah.

5. Several children climb a tree at the heart of the USC campus.

6. Deangelo Greene (left) and Joe Johnson peruse gardening books.

7. Festival attendees browse at one of the many booksellers stationed throughout the campus.

8. Kayla Tomizawa, a USC senior majoring in electrical engineering, speaks with Bryan Guzman about a robot made by Foshay Learning Center students.

9. USC professor T.C. Boyle speaks about his latest novel, *The Harder They Come*, at the Tutor Campus Center.

10. Author and NPR commentator Sandra Tsing Loh discusses the process

of memoir writing during one of the festival's many panels. Loh, a USC alumna, also teaches in the Dornsife College's professional writing program.

11. Recording star Billy Idol reads an excerpt from his book, *Dancing with Myself*.

12. Critic and USC professor Josh Kun (left) and chef and restaurateur Roy Choi participate in a panel entitled, "To Live and Dine in LA: Food Pasts, Food Futures."

13. Actor and screenwriter Jason Segel.

14. Journalist and bestselling author Malcolm Gladwell filled Bovard Auditorium to the rafters.

Photo 4 Gus Ruelas; Photos 5-8, 10, 12 David Sprague; Photos 9 and 11 Sarah Golonka; Photos 13 and 14 Karwaini Matthews

