

“Events like Literary Death Match are helping to revitalize the coolitude of the printed word.”

Interview Magazine



Key & Peele co-star Keegan-Michael Key makes his LDM entrance. Photo by Jason Gutierrez.

# LITERARY DEATH MATCH

4 authors | 3 judges | 2 finalists | 1 champion

Literary Death Match — a groundbreaking take on both the written and spoken word — is an electrifying, feel-good spectacle that takes place in over 70 cities around the planet.

Part literary event, part comedy show, part game show, Literary Death Match brings together four of today's finest writers to compete in an edge-of-your-seat read-off critiqued by three celebrity judges, and concluded by a slapstick showdown to decide the ultimate champion.

“When you can’t decide between *American Pastoral* and *American Gladiators*, between Henry James and Henry Rollins, and between a reading and a beating, Literary Death Match is a kickass All Of The Above.”

Daniel Handler, author of *Adverbs* and the *Lemony Snicket* series



Comedian Tig Notaro judges LDM, alongside Michael C. Hall and author Jonathan Lethem. Photo by Jason Gutierrez.

Guggenheim Fellow D.A. Powell crowned after LDM victory.  
Photo by Tim Faust.



### How It Works

Literary Death Match features a mix of four established and emerging authors who perform their most brilliant work before a live audience and a panel of three all-star judges. After a pair of readings, the judges take turns spouting hilarious, off-the-wall commentary, focusing on Literary Merit, Performance and Intangibles.

The judges select two authors to advance to the finals, where we trade in the show’s literary sensibility for an absurdly comical climax — like a spirited game of Pin the Mustache on Hemingway, or a literary spelling bee featuring complicated author names — to decide who takes home the Literary Death Match crown.

### Where It Happens

Since Literary Death Match debuted in New York City in March 2006, LDM has expanded to 60 cities worldwide (Los Angeles, London, Brooklyn, Hong Kong, San Francisco, Dublin, Reykjavik, Calgary, Helsinki, Edinburgh, Paris and beyond). LDM filmed a Kickstarter-funded TV pilot in 2012, and was optioned for television in 2022.

Regularly staged in theaters and clubs, Literary Death Match is a fixture at worldclass festivals around the globe (Texas Book Festival, LA Times Festival of Books, Brisbane Writers Festival), and has been featured at cultural centers like LA’s Hammer Museum, Melbourne’s Wheeler Centre and Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

## Literary Death Match By the Numbers

Debuted	Shows	Cities	Tickets Sold
2006	530	72	107k

“...the most entertaining reading series ever.”

LA Times



Above: New York Times best-selling author Jillian Lauren wows an LA audience. Right: Author and former SNL star Jenny Slate shows off silly-string accuracy in NYC. Photos by Clinton Brandhagen.



## The Audience

Since 2006, Literary Death Match has attracted over 107,000 guests worldwide, with audiences that boast a bevy of educated, urban tastemakers between the ages of 21-45 (56% women). Our club and theater crowds range between 75-300 fans, while our shows at festivals and cultural institutions have attracted as many as 800 guests.

## Spreading the Word

Literary Death Match is regularly featured in U.S. and international media, on blogs, and listed in print and online event magazines. Our newsletter reaches 27,000 people, and our site averages 6,600 unique visitors and 18,500 unique page views every month. We have nearly 15,000 Twitter followers, and 6,000+ “likes” on Facebook. We post LDM content on Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok.

## The Pugilists

Literary Death Match has featured over 1,500 judges like award-winning writer-directors Jason Reitman, Jill Soloway, Diablo Cody, Dustin Lance Black and Damon Lindelof; actors Parker Posey, Keegan-Michael Key, BJ Novak, Michael Shannon, Michaela Watkins, Michael Ian Black, and the cast of HBO’s *Silicon Valley*; comedians Tig Notaro, David Cross, Jenny Slate, Hannibal Buress and Rob Delaney; Pulitzer Prize-winners Jeffrey Eugenides, Viet Thanh Nguyen and Jane Smiley; U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins; *Fight Club* author Chuck Palahniuk; *Trainspotting* author Irvine Welsh; Australian genius Benjamin Law; musicians Henry Rollins and Moby; and more than 2,100 readers, including award-winners Neil Gaiman, Tom Perrotta, Susan Orlean, Marlon James, Graham Moore, Liz Meriwether and Daniel Handler (a.k.a. Lemony Snicket).

## Get In Touch:

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# What People are Saying About Literary Death Match

"Events like Literary Death Match are helping to revitalize the coolitude of the printed word." — [Interview Magazine](#)

"The Literary Death Match combines the best things about literature, mixed with a rare, anarchic energy." — [Ben Greenman, The New Yorker](#)

"...the most entertaining reading series ever." — [LA Times](#)

"Drenched in electric ambience that feels one step away from something you'd see on TV." — [LA Weekly](#)

"as engaging as the best concerts, plays and stand-up comedy sets I've ever seen, all rolled into one." — [Nashville Scene](#)

"Literary Death Match is hardcover love with a paperback touch."  
— [Dig Boston](#)

"The lit series everyone's talking about isn't afraid to make a scene."  
— [7x7 Magazine](#)

"Facetious frivolity and wiseacre whimsy abound."  
— [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#)

"Welcome to the new world of literary nights where entertainment is king."  
— [Independent \(UK\)](#)

"While the days of a Norman Mailer threatening to take this shit outside are, like the five-martini lunch and freelance writing budgets, no longer the norm, at least the Literary Death Match offers the spectacle of writers squaring off."  
— [Baltimore City Paper](#)

"A hybrid game show/reading, the LDM is hyperactive, good-natured and downright silly. And it works." — [TimeOut Beijing](#)