

# Bumbershoot Books: Famous Festival Offers More Than Music | CultureMob

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by Gemma Alexander | 07/02/12 |

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Musical Bumbershoot performers The Vaseline's prepare to attend Words & Ideas

With three solid days of top-notch music from multiple genres on numerous stages, it's easy to forget that Bumbershoot is more than a music festival. Bumbershoot is North America's largest urban arts festival, with programming in dance, theatre, improv, poetry, literature, and cultural commentary, as well as visual arts, comedy, and film.

Bookish Seattlites will be most interested in the Words & Ideas program. Housed in the Leo K. Theater, Words & Ideas is "Bumbershoot's popular literary arts and lectures program that features conversations, performances, panel discussions, and readings exploring the points where pop culture, new media, literature, theories, and trends intersect and explode into new cultural phenomena."

From bedtime stories to cookbooks, TV shows to trivia, the program focuses on words. On Saturday, Adam Mansbach will share the creative process behind *Go the Fuck to Sleep*, the bedtime story that became an internet meme when Samuel L. Jackson narrated its brilliant rhymes of parental frustration. The team of chefs, scientists, writers, and food lovers behind the award-winning molecular gastronomy cookbook, *Modernist Cuisine*, will demonstrate their high-tech techniques.

Screenwriters David X. Cohen, Eric Horsted, Ken Keeler, Dan Vebber, Josh Weinstein, and Mike Rowe, who authored the cult TV classic, *Futurama*, will discuss the show's characters, social commentary, and depictions of the future. Aspiring writers will want to see spoken-word poets Karen Finneyfrock, Tara Hardy, Rose McAleese, Storme Webber, and Hedgebrook's Executive Director Amy Wheeler reveal what really happens at the famous Whidbey Island writer's retreat.

On Sunday, Joe Raiola, senior editor of MAD Magazine and author of *The Joy of Censorship*, will discuss censorship in America, the true meaning of obscenity, and the history of MAD Magazine. Eric Erlandson, who played guitar for Hole, will discuss his book compiled of letters he wrote to Kurt Cobain, and his friendship with Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love. NPR favorite Charles Phoenix will perform his comedy slide-show celebrating tourist traps, theme parks, car culture, space age style, and the 1962 Seattle World's Fair, while also revealing his genuine insight into local landmarks and history.

On Monday, JEOPARDY! Champion Ken Jennings will talk about his latest book, *Maphead*, and host a live trivia contest. The Bushwick Book Club will feature Sean Nelson, Tai Shan, Wes Weddell, Bucket of Honey and others performing music inspired by Madeline L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*. In a session called "Remix, Plagiarism, or Theft?" web-series creator Kirby Ferguson and novelist/memoirist Quentin Rowan will discuss creativity, ownership and the law in their own artistic projects, followed by a moderated discussion and audience Q&A. Ferguson, a New York-based filmmaker, asserts that there are no original ideas and everything is a remix. Rowan just completed his memoir, *Never Say Goodbye*, describing the scandal that surrounded him after his published work was discovered to have plagiarized numerous sources.

A highlight of the Words & Ideas program is the panel series "Why This? Why That? Why Now?" in which a different pair of current cultural trends is dissected by a panel of cultural experts each day of the festival. This year, the topics are:

- *Why Fairy Tales? Why War on Women? Why Now?* with Lindy West and others.
- *Why Dubstep? Why Trap Music? Why Now?* with as-yet unnamed DJs and live demonstrations, and
- *Why Hipsters? Why Slacktivism? Why Now?* with comedian Solomon Georgio and others.



Bushwick Book Club

Bumbershoot: Seattle's Music & Arts Festival takes place September 1-3 at Seattle Center. Single-day (\$40) and 3-day tickets (\$110), and Platinum and Gold passes for Bumbershoot 2012 are available for purchase at [bumbershoot.org/tickets](http://bumbershoot.org/tickets). Children 10 and under do not need a ticket to enter.

