



Listen up and be amazed: That's the art of storytelling  
Écoutez et laissez-vous émerveiller: voilà l'art du conte

[www.storytellers-conteurs.ca](http://www.storytellers-conteurs.ca)  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 18, 2021**

**EVENT:** Launch Event for Rita Cox's Storytelling Album

## **In Conversation with Rita Cox and Friends: Celebrating the CD Launch of *Wit and Wisdom***

Presented by the StorySave Program of Storytellers of Canada – Conteurs du Canada

**DESCRIPTION:** On November 30th, join us for a fascinating online panel discussion to officially launch the highly anticipated album, *Wit and Wisdom: Anansi Tales and Other Stories* by iconic storyteller, author, teacher and librarian, Dr. Rita Cox. The launch also celebrates release of the accompanying StorySave podcast episode *Rita Cox: The Gently Echoed Music*.

***In Conversation with Rita Cox* takes place online through Zoom, on November 30th at 7pm EST (4pm Pacific; 8pm Atlantic).** Rita hosts this panel-style talk along with some distinguished colleagues and friends who are experts in storytelling, library sciences, literacy advocacy and education. Over the course of 90-minutes, Rita and her guests will examine the role of oral tradition and the art of storytelling, and why albums like *Wit and Wisdom* are so important. With questions from the audience encouraged, this event promises to be a thought-provoking discussion led by master storyteller, Dr Rita Cox.

### **About Dr. Rita Cox**

Dr. Rita Cox is an award-winning author and master storyteller who has performed across North America, in Europe, Brazil and the Caribbean, on stage, radio and television. She tells stories from the Caribbean, Africa and around the world and her stories have appeared in many anthologies and school readers. She was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada in 1997, is a recipient of the 1995 Black Achievement Award, and of honorary degrees from York and Wilfred Laurier Universities.



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## About the Album and Podcast Project

*Wit and Wisdom: Anansi Tales and Other Stories* is a two-disc collection of Afro-Caribbean stories that is infused with Rita's Trinidadian cultural history and her captivating storytelling style. Disc 1 showcases the much-loved trickster tales of Anansi, brought to the Caribbean by slaves from West Africa and passed on orally through generations. Disc 2 is devoted to legendary tales about how and why things came to be, and to supernatural stories whose characters' names reflect the early French colonial influences.

Rita draws from her deep knowledge of oral tradition, and is beloved for her storytelling. This very special collection will resonate with those who know Rita from her long career as a librarian and literacy advocate, and is sure to captivate new fans everywhere.

In StorySave's podcast episode, *Rita Cox: The Gently Echoed Music* we get the stories behind *Wit and Wisdom*. Rita takes us on a journey from her childhood in Trinidad, to her legendary library and storytelling career in New York and Toronto, and discusses the origins of Caribbean folktales, the profound role of libraries, and how storytelling shaped her life. It's a story you don't want to miss.

## Featured Panelists

- **Itah Sadu** is an acclaimed author, storyteller, and community developer, and co-owner of Toronto's ground-breaking bookstore and community space, A Different Booklist Cultural Centre.
- **Jean Augustine** is a Grenadian-Canadian educator, social advocate and politician. She was the first Black Canadian woman to serve as a federal Minister of the Crown and Member of Parliament, and served as the first Fairness Commissioner of Ontario. Dr. Augustine has been awarded multiple honorary doctorates, and is a member of the Order of Canada, among many other honours and awards.
- **Dan Yashinsky** is an award-winning storyteller, author, broadcaster and community animator. He is the founder of the Toronto Festival of Storytelling, and *1,001 Friday Nights of Storytelling*, and co-founder of Storytelling Toronto. Dan has been storyteller-in-residence for several major institutions, and has performed and taught at festivals across Canada and around the world.



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- **Debra Baptiste** is Storytelling Toronto's first Executive Director. She has a degree in Arts Administration, and is the former Director of the International Storytelling Toronto Festival, and the former Development and Grants Officer for Storytelling Toronto.
- **Kesha Christie** is a professional storyteller, motivational speaker and popular weekly podcast host. Kesha also serves on the board of Storytellers of Canada - Conteurs du Canada, and is guest-host of the StorySave podcast episode on Rita Cox.
- **Jeffrey Canton** is a storyteller, teacher and writer who has worked for Toronto Public Library, the Canadian Children's Book Centre and The Word on the Street. He has been a lecturer at York University, The Life Institute and Storytelling Toronto and is a longtime member of Queers in Your Ears, Toronto's oldest LGBTQ storytelling collective. He is currently the Children's Book columnist for The Globe and Mail.

### Event Details

- November 30th at 7pm EST (4pm Pacific; 8pm Atlantic).
- Register for the concert through Eventbrite with this link: <https://bit.ly/3cfBBC6>
- Email for assistance or more information: [admin@storytellers-conteurs.ca](mailto:admin@storytellers-conteurs.ca)

### About the StorySave Program

The StorySave Program was established by Storytellers of Canada – Conteurs du Canada (SC-CC) as a means of enhancing storytelling's living contribution to Canada's oral and literary heritage. The program records the work of highly accomplished storytellers from the Canadian storytelling community as multivolume albums and other recorded products. Tellers selected for inclusion in the recording program are those who tell out of very particular repertoires, and have something unique to offer. Learn more about StorySave's collection at: <http://www.storytellers-conteurs.ca/en/featured-storytellers.html> or contact Marion Gruner, StorySave's Producer and Program Manager: [storysave@storytellers-conteurs.ca](mailto:storysave@storytellers-conteurs.ca)



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## About Storytellers of Canada – Conteurs du Canada

SC-CC is Canada's only national arts organization representing the art of storytelling. SC-CC strives to develop and nurture oral storytelling by connecting people, reflecting culture, and inspiring discovery through the art of storytelling.

### Contact Information:

For further information about Storytellers of Canada - Conteurs du Canada, the StorySave Program, or to arrange an interview with Dr. Rita Cox, please contact Marion Gruner, StorySave Program Manager, at [storysave@storytellers-conteurs.ca](mailto:storysave@storytellers-conteurs.ca)

Twitter: [@StoryCanada](https://twitter.com/StoryCanada)

SCCC Website: [www.storytellers-conteurs.ca](http://www.storytellers-conteurs.ca)

SCCC Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/StorytellersConteurs>

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Canada Council for the Arts  
Conseil des arts du Canada

Storytellers of Canada - Conteurs du Canada also wishes to acknowledge and thank the Ontario Arts Council for their support of our core activities, and their support of Rita Cox's album and podcast .



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