

Spanish author Carlos Castán reads Don Quixote

✘ Saturday 23rd April was a busy day for the book calendar – the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare’s death and World Book Night.

At Summerhall that evening, however, Vamos Scotland organised a unique marathon reading of Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, bringing Spanish writer Carlos Castán to Edinburgh to promote the new English translation of his book, *Bad Light*, and hosting this event paying tribute to this influential Spanish pre-eminent novelist. With a large Spanish community in Scotland the organisers were keen to see this happen, hoping to widen Edinburgh’s perception of Spanish writing.


As it was his first time in Scotland, representing Spanish writing, Castán discussed his new novel and his initial thoughts on Edinburgh, a city doused in literature.

How does it feel to be in Edinburgh celebrating Cervantes with this event?

CC: It is a first novel and first novel written in English (*Bad Light*). Before this I had written short stories but this is my first novel on my own. Edinburgh – I am fascinated with this city. I have walked and wandered through the city and have seen the Writer’s Museum. With Robert Louis Stevenson and others it is literary congested, and great to be here.

Now it is World Book Night tonight. Was it intentional to be involved in this and participating?

CC: It is a very interesting idea I did not know about, but it’s fundamental to advocate reading. I believe it is totally necessary that people continue reading.

As a Spanish author yourself, were you heavily influenced by Cervantes' story of *Don Quixote*? 

CC: Everybody has been directly influenced by *Don Quixote*. It is the first modern novel. Before this there were stories of chivalry or knight's tales and they had a core Spanish-reading audience. However, *Don Quixote* broke through in the world and opened the door for Cervantes being deciphered.

***Bad Light*, your novel, came out in February. Are you able to give insight into the novel and your inspiration for writing it?**

CC: It's a personal story, narrated in first person. The protagonist goes back to revise his own life, to a murder, to find out who he really is. Basically this is one of the threads of the story but in fact it is a crossroads of stories. As well, it is a novel about fear and introspection. In a way it's a Proustian novel in which its trying to find out what's important and what is not as well as one's own identity.

This event was organised by Vamos Scotland alongside the Spanish Embassy in UK, culturally broadening, introducing us further to the Spanish literary talent.