Paul Theroux
Keynote Speaker
The Jack London Society
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“Theroux may be one of our most prolific travel writers, but he is also one of our best. The reason for this, I think, is his ability to convey the optimism of travel while refusing to tell lies about what he encounters. You feel hopeful when you read him, and you feel that you’re being told the truth, and that’s a good enough reason to stay with him.”

—Carolyn Sylge, The New Statesman

Paul Theroux is described by writer and friend Jonathan Raban as “utterly American, possessing all of those democratic, Yankee, can-do qualities.” These traits have served him well on explorations around the world for over fifty years, pen in hand, always with an eye for the odd, compelling details.

Readers depend on his uncompromising, sometimes brazen reportage; audiences remember him for his witty, acerbic asides and the tremendous breadth of literature he brings to bear. Theroux is an avid, impassioned reader and literary scholar. His relentless enthusiasm for the pursuit of new discoveries and an abiding respect and affection for his readers and audience are abundantly evident in person. “It’s like a friendship [with the reader],” Theroux says; “a bond develops if you write a lot of books.”

Half a lifetime ago, Paul Theroux virtually invented the modern travel narrative by recounting his grand tour by train through Asia. In the four decades since, the world he recorded in The Great Railway Bazaar has undergone phenomenal change, and no one has better captured the texture and meaning of that changing landscape than Theroux himself. His highly acclaimed travel books include Riding the Iron Rooster, Dark Star Safari, Ghost Train to the Eastern Star, and The Last Train to Zona Verde. After decades of travelling to the farthest corners of the world, Theroux decided to train his eye stateside.

His first US-based travelogue, Deep South, explores the overlooked corners of the American South 50 years after the Civil Rights Movement. Theroux is also the author of many novels, including Picture Palace, The Mosquito Coast, Hotel Honolulu, Blinding Light, and, most recently, Mother Land, about the imposing matriarch of a large Cape Cod family. In May 2018, he published Figures in a Landscape: People and Places, which Publisher's Weekly praised in a starred review as "a magisterial grouping of intimate remembrances, globe-trotting adventures, and incisive literary critiques." Theroux is a recipient of a Royal Medal from the Royal Geographic Society. His stories and essays appear regularly in a variety of magazines, including Time, Harper's, The Atlantic, The New Yorker, GQ, and Esquire. Theroux's next book, out in fall 2018, will be about the cultures on both sides of the US-Mexico border.

http://www.lyceumagency.com/speakers/paul-theroux/